

Meeting urges efforts for food security

AMMAN (Petra) — A conference on pan-Arab food security and investment concluded in Amman Tuesday with a call on Arab leaders to unify ranks and combine efforts to meet the economic, agricultural and industrial needs of the Arab World. In an appeal sent to Arab heads of state, the participants said agricultural production of the Arab World was below the required levels. They said Arab countries import \$30 billion worth of food supplies from foreign countries, warning that in the future they might not find enough suppliers of their food needs. They appealed to all concerned Arab authorities to offer support to all agricultural and industrial projects to be able to compete with other world countries and economic blocs and to meet the needs of Arab nation. The participants also urged Arab leaders to establish an Arab economic bloc to be able to benefit in the best manner of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and to reduce its negative impact on Arab countries.

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Peres says Israel ready, urges Assad to move towards peace

Israeli premier, in speech to U.S. Congress, vows not to let peace-making be secondary to internal politics

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres made a heartfelt appeal to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Tuesday to seize the "historic opportunity" before them and make peace a reality in the Middle East.

Mr. Peres, speaking to U.S. lawmakers at a joint session of Congress, used the podium offered by the legislature to address Mr. Assad directly and urge him to help ensure that a global peace is restored to the Middle East before the turn of the century.

"Without forgetting the past, let us not look back," Mr. Peres said to Mr. Assad. "Let (our) fingertips touch a new untested hope. Let each party yield to the other, each giving consideration to the respected needs of the other, mutually so, he to us, we to him."

"Without illusion, but with resolve, we shall stand ready

to make demanding decisions, if you are, if Assad is," he said as thunderous applause erupted from the chamber.

Israel is prepared to "negotiate relentlessly," Mr. Peres said, "if Assad is."

"I believe we face a historic opportunity, perhaps of a galloping nature," he added.

The appeal marked an attempt by Mr. Peres to build on the openness Mr. Assad displayed the previous day during a telephone conversation with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House.

Mr. Clinton said Mr. Assad had pledged to "do his best" to reach a settlement and agreed to meet with Secretary of State Warren Christopher later this week to discuss new proposals from the Israeli side on breaking the deadlock.

Syria gave a cautious welcome to Mr. Peres' vow to proceed "full speed ahead"

to resolve differences with Damascus.

But a senior Syrian official gave no indication Damascus would relent over its demand to see a full withdrawal by Israel from the Golan.

"The words of Peres about moving the peace process forward are welcome but we need to see if there is anything new regarding full withdrawal from the Golan," said the official.

"The Israeli premier should go into details and not limit his statements to generalities. He should specify that peace with Syria could not be achieved without a total pull back from the Golan Heights," he added.

The official said talk about any breakthrough in the negotiations between Syria and Israel could not be made before Mr. Christopher's tour of the region starting on Thursday.

"It depends on what ideas Christopher would bring with

him and whether these ideas are new and could remove the obstacles which were blocking the negotiations so far," he said.

Talks between Syria and Israel broke down in June over disagreements on security arrangements that would follow an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Israel wants to operate early-warning radar stations there, a demand Syria has steadfastly refused.

Israeli state radio said Mr. Peres proposed to Mr. Clinton setting up joint Israeli-Syrian working groups that would negotiate not only the future of the Golan Heights but also water-sharing arrangements, economic relations, military issues, Lebanon, and broader Middle East peace questions.

State-run Damascus Radio said:

"Hopes have been revived

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Jordan's offer to host Iraqi opposition conference is prompted by obstinacy of regime in Baghdad, senior official says

Source reveals attempt by King to convince Saddam of the pressing need to lift sanctions after Kamel's defection

By Natasha Bukhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's offer to host a gathering of Iraqi opposition leaders to discuss a formula for political change in Iraq came after the failure of repeated attempts by His Majesty King Hussein to convince Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to take concrete steps towards lifting the crippling sanctions against Baghdad, a senior government official said Tuesday.

The last of these attempts was a letter from the King to

President Saddam following the Aug. 8 defection to Jordan of Iraqi military weapons expert and President Saddam's son-in-law, General Hussein Kamel, to which Jordan got a negative response, according to the official, who requested anonymity.

In the letter, whose contents have hitherto not been revealed, "the King strongly advised the Iraqi president to take concrete measures towards meeting the conditions of the U.N. Security Council and lifting the crippling sanc-

tions," the official said.

"His Majesty recommended that Baghdad open a new dialogue with the West based on Iraqi acceptance of U.N. resolutions and (Baghdad) assuming a role in the search for peace and stability throughout the Middle East," the official told the Jordan Times in an interview.

He said that President Saddam's refusal to accept the advice, or even to accept U.N. Resolution 986, which allows Iraq partial oil sales to meet humanitarian needs which is seen as the only way

for an initial alleviating for the suffering of Iraqis, and the Iraqi leader's disinclination to join the region's peace march prompted King Hussein to call for political change in Iraq.

According to the official, the letter to President Saddam was delivered by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, who travelled to Baghdad shortly after the Aug. 8 defection to Jordan of Gen. Kamel.

That trip by Mr. Qasem

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinians raise flag over Israel-free Nablus

NABLUS (Agencies) — Palestinian police raised the flag over the former Israeli military headquarters in the West Bank town of Nablus on Tuesday while thousands celebrated the end of 28 years of occupation.

People jammed the streets, singing and dancing, happy that Israel had pulled out on Monday night, 48 hours earlier than expected to lessen the chance of confrontations with Palestinians.

The town of 130,000 is the biggest of six due to be handed over his month under a peace deal signed in September in Washington between Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime

Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was assassinated by a Jew last month.

"I am very happy for the liberation of Nablus and because what we had agreed upon is being implemented faithfully," Mr. Arafat told reporters in the self-rule area of Gaza.

Thousands cheered as Palestinian police raised the flag over the former Israeli military headquarters accompanied by the Palestinian national anthem (see page 2).

"This is a historic moment in our lives. We can't believe the Israelis are actually out of our lives," said 23-year-old Majed Al Masri.

Palestinians were happily shocked when earlier they

saw the last of five Israeli army jeeps leave military headquarters.

"The Israeli military governor called us and said they wanted to leave Nablus at 11:00 p.m., but they escaped earlier because they were afraid there would be bloody clashes with the people," said a senior PLO official.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), caught by surprise, had yet to bring in PLO police to take over. City fathers improvised, deploying municipal police to maintain order.

Hours later hundreds of Palestinian policemen arrived, waving their M16s

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Juppe vows to pursue reform as workers put up show of strength

PARIS (Agencies) — Prime Minister Alain Juppe, defying mass street demonstrations and a 19-day-old public transport strike, vowed on Tuesday that his disputed reform of France's indebted welfare system would go ahead.

"This reform will come into effect, gradually and with consultation," Mr. Juppe told parliament. "There is no serious alternative to the reform I proposed."

The conservative premier, replying to a left-wing opposition no-confidence motion, said the first two decrees creating a new tax to pay off the social security fund's debts and reforming the organisation of health care would take effect in January.

Other decrees reforming hospitals, regionalising health services and giving parliament a say in the annual welfare budget would come into effect over the following four months.

In an effort to conciliate trade unions demanding the withdrawal of the plan, Mr. Juppe said the role of the "social partners" — unions and employers — who currently manage the social security system would be guaranteed in the future.

He also confirmed to parliament concessions he made to the unions on Monday, including the shelving of a disputed state contract to overhaul France's loss-making railways and the holding of a "social summit" in the near future on unem-

ployment.

Earlier Tuesday, more than a million French workers downed tools and staged protest rallies across the country, threatening the survival of Mr. Juppe in spite of the concessions he made.

After Mr. Juppe announced a climbdown Monday, two out of the three main French unions vowed Tuesday to continue to fight his plans to reform the country's generous and heavily indebted welfare system and health service.

As record crowds demonstrated in several French cities in the sixth national day of protest since the strike movement began on Nov. 24, Louis Vianet, head of the

(Continued on page 7)

Papandreou said 'stable'

ATHENS (Agencies) — Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou was reported to be in a "stable" condition on Tuesday after kidney and respiratory problems were compounded by an infection and orientation trouble.

A medical bulletin from doctors treating the 76-year-old statesman said he was taken off a respiratory machine "after a lowering in his temperature" from a fever which developed Monday.

However, he was still undergoing kidney dialysis to purify his blood and also antibiotic treatment to help him fight off an infection.

Checks to determine the causes of that infection "are good and do not show any problem," the bulletin added.

Mr. Papandreou was admitted to the Onassis cardiology centre with pneumonia more than three weeks ago.

Earlier this month he was fitted with the feeding tube to curb weight loss. He has lost more than 10 kilograms since his admission on Nov. 20.

Meanwhile the pro-government daily Ta Nea reported for the first time that Mr. Papandreou was suffering from "confusion and orientation trouble" and could not recognise some of his doctors.

Mr. Papandreou's worsening health was expected to intensify calls for a successor to be chosen in his PASOK socialist party.

PASOK's policy-making executive bureau met on Monday night and discussed his possible successor.

Party sources said if Mr.

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Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour on Tuesday present to His Majesty King Hussein the two Houses' reply to the Speech from the Throne on Dec. 2 (Petra photos)

Parliament voices total support for stands outlined by Monarch

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament on Tuesday voiced their full support for His Majesty King Hussein's leadership and pledged to preserve democracy in the name of democracy.

In separate meetings with the King at the Royal Court to deliver the two chambers' replies to the Speech from the Throne opening the legislature's annual session on Dec. 2, the speakers of the two houses affirmed their commitment to enhancing the democratisation process,

which, they said, offers an example to other countries in the region.

They also expressed support for the King's efforts to achieve Arab reconciliation and unify Arab ranks.

Upper House Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi praised the King's achievements in developing and fortifying Jordan, saying His Majesty managed to place the Kingdom on the economic map of the world.

"The Amman economic conference was a crowning achievement of all these blessed efforts and a natural out-

come of the stage of peace," Mr. Lawzi said.

He said the Jordanian people were optimistic that the Kingdom would overcome economic hardships facing it and that the government would continue its efforts to institutionalise government work and fight bureaucracy with the aim of activating the private sector's role in serving the country.

He added the Senate fully supports plans aiming at providing comprehensive social, health and food security for citizens through providing job opportunities and sup-

porting social aid programmes and health insurance schemes.

"We agree with you, Your Majesty, that the educational process is the foundation of development and the basis of progress and that the interests of the coming generations require promoting knowledge, developing educational techniques and enhancing the concepts of participation, cooperation and democracy," said the Senate speaker.

He said the freedom of

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan, warning it won't tolerate destabilisation attempts, says expulsion of Iranian diplomat is final

By Nermeen Murad

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A senior Jordanian official denied Tuesday that Jordan had gone back on its decision to expel an Iranian diplomat and confirmed that the embassy's third secretary was involved in attempts to destabilise the Kingdom.

The senior official, who asked not to be named, was specifically referring to a "clarification" published by the Islamist Al Sabeel weekly yesterday in which the Iranian embassy said that "recent reports and rumours about the third secretary (Said Bateni) are baseless."

The embassy did not explain what these reports and rumours were but described them as "baseless accusations, allegations and fabrications."

The Iranian embassy's response, published by Al Sabeel, did not explicitly say that Jordan had gone back on its decision to expel Mr. Bateni but the wording of the

statement appeared to lend credence to other reports that Jordan might have gone back on the expulsion decision following a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and Iranian Ambassador Ahmad Destamalzchi on which His Majesty was handed a message from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, which reported the meeting, did not say what the content of the letter was, but it said that it dealt with "bilateral relations and means of enhancing them for the benefit of the people in both countries."

The senior official, however, told the Jordan Times that the expulsion papers had been signed by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the decision to declare him a persona non grata still holds.

The official explained that the decision to expel the diplomat "is a serious decision that will also make clear to

Iran and other countries that Jordan's security is not to be tampered with."

Jordan, according to the official, has been closely watching the activities of the Iranian diplomat and has tied him to specific activities that appear to target Jordan's security.

"Had the campaign against Jordan confined itself to media and political attacks we would have contained the problem just as we have contained similar problems throughout our history," the official said. "But because these campaigns have lent themselves to possible terrorist attacks, we will not sit idle and we will pre-empt any attack."

The official and other sources said that there had been attempts recently against Jordan's security and "we have been able to discover them and arrest the would-be perpetrators."

The "perpetrators," according to the sources, are linked to extremist Palesti-

nian factions including the Abu Nidal group, Jihad Islami and a new group by the name of Akramah.

The sources said that these groups are generally known to be "guns for hire" and information available to Jordan indicated Iranian involvement with a possible backing from Syria.

Jordanian and Syrian foreign ministers Abdul Karim Kabariti and Farouk Sharaa met on the sidelines of the Barcelona conference in late November to discuss Jordan's concerns over attempts against its stability.

The sources did not reveal specific details of the meeting but told the Jordan Times that Mr. Sharaa assured Mr. Kabariti that "Jordan's security is an integral part of the Syria's security and that Damascus is committed to the stability" of the Kingdom.

The meeting between the

(Continued on page 7)

Bosnian Serbs free two French pilots

ZVORNIK, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Bosnian Serbs on Tuesday released two French airmen shot down over Bosnia more than three months ago, ending a tense stand-off between Paris and Belgrade just 48 hours before the signing of a Bosnia peace accord.

The Serbs handed over Captain Frederic Chiffot and Lieutenant Jose Souvignat, both of whom looked pale and tired, shortly after 2:00 p.m. (1300 GMT) at a motel in this town on the border between Bosnia and Serbia.

The release of the two pilots was confirmed in Paris, with the Elysee Palace saying French President Jacques Chirac "rejoices, along with all French people" at the men's release.

Mr. Chirac telephoned the two airmen shortly after they had been directed to a room here where the head of the French joint chiefs-of-staff, General Jean-Philippe Douin, was waiting with top-ranking Bosnian Serb and Serbian generals.

Capt. Chiffot walked with difficulty as the two airmen, flanked by policemen, headed for the room, witnesses reported.

Before leaving Zvornik for

Serbia, Lt. Souvignat said the two had been well treated during their captivity.

"We were well looked after," he said.

In Paris, presidential spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said the pilots were expected to return to France via Belgrade Tuesday evening.

She said the pair were in good health and added that Mr. Chirac had personally telephoned the pilots' wives to inform them of the release.

The duo were shot down during North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air raids near the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Pale on Aug. 30.

Earlier, the Bosnian Serb military said in a statement it would free the two airmen "in the name of traditional friendship between the French and Serb peoples."

France last week turned up the heat on rebel Bosnian Serbs and their erstwhile patron, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, threatening tough action unless firm news on the men's fate was received by Sunday.

Meanwhile, the commander of NATO's heavily-

(Continued on page 7)

Mubarak scoffs at call for poll probe

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday rejected calls from foreign countries to investigate allegations of fraud in Egypt's general elections.

"I absolutely do not accept any such demand, no matter where it comes from," Mr. Mubarak said at the first meeting of his ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) since the two-round vote, according to Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif.

His party swept to victory in the polls gaining 417 out of the 444 seats in the parliament compared to the opposition which polled only 14. The remaining seats went to independents, according to the latest figures.

Mr. Mubarak, who also named 10 extra deputies to the parliament on Monday, said "neither the United States nor any other country has explicitly or implicitly called for an investigation into the elections."

He was "indignant that certain political parties have called for an international supervision of the elections" and stressed that Egypt had "reached the age of (political) maturity."

The Egyptian opposition has called for international

supervision of elections accusing the government of massive vote-rigging and harassment in both rounds of the polls on Nov. 29 and Dec. 6.

The U.S. embassy in Cairo said Tuesday in a statement that "at no time did the American ambassador protest the elections to Foreign Minister (Amr) Musa or to any other Egyptian official."

"Nor did the State Department spokesman or the ambassador call for an investigation of the elections."

But a State Department spokesman said last Thursday, "We fully expect that the Egyptian government will investigate charges of irregularities and follow up with appropriate measures," in a briefing statement released here.

Appeals have been filed against vote results for 56 more seats in parliament, putting around 40 per cent of its seats in question, legal sources said.

Losing candidates filed 14 new appeals to results in their district, joining 14 appeals made Sunday to an administrative court, the sources said.

The Egyptian opposition has called for international

(Continued on page 7)

U.N. is concerned over big military buildup in Cyprus

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali expressed renewed concern on Monday at the "excessive levels of military forces and armaments" in Cyprus and the rate at which they were being strengthened.

"Neither side has heeded the Security Council's repeated calls for a significant reduction in the number of foreign troops and in defence spending in Cyprus," he said.

"It has also not been possible to make progress even on modest measures, repeatedly called for by the council, aimed at reducing confrontation between the two sides along the cease fire lines," he added.

The U.N. chief's comments were part of a report recommending a further six-month renewal, until June 30, 1996, of the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), comprising 1,150 troops and 34 civilian police.

The force, which includes soldiers from Argentina, Austria, Britain, Canada, Finland, Hungary and Ireland, and police from Australia and Ireland, has been stationed on the island since 1964 to help keep peace between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974, when Turkish troops landed in the north of the island in reaction to a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece. In 1983 the Turkish Cypriots proclaimed their own state,

recognised only by Ankara. U.N. efforts to reunite the island under a federal system have continued for years, without success.

In a brief reference to this, Dr. Ghali said almost all elements needed for a just and lasting settlement were on the table and he hoped that "in the next few months it will be possible to generate the necessary political will to overcome the long-standing deadlock in the negotiating process."

Giving details of the military build-up on both sides, he said that, with the arrival of an additional 14 tanks, the Turkish forces now had approximately 265 M-48A5 tanks.

"There was a significant increase in the number of armoured personnel carriers, a continued upgrading of artillery from 105 mm to 155 mm a significant enhancement in their air defence capability with the arrival of shoulder-launched missiles and guns and a significant increase in their battlefield surveillance capability."

This represented a significant increase in the military capability of the Turkish forces in Cyprus, he said, adding "In terms of the ratio of military personnel to inhabitants, with over 30,000 Turkish troops and 4,500 Turkish Cypriot troops, the northern part of the island remains one of the most densely militarised areas in the world."

The secretary-general said the Turkish Guard in the south, "though weaker by far

than the Turkish forces in Cyprus, has continued its comprehensive upgrading programme."

An 18 additional BMP 3 infantry fighting vehicles had been delivered and the National Guard had increased its holdings of AMX-30 tanks to 104, with the acquisition of 56 such tanks currently being overhauled in Greece.

"In addition, 224 of the first year's target of 500 volunteers from Greece for service with the national guard have arrived in Cyprus," he said, while Greek naval and air force units took part in a recent annual guard exercise.

Dr. Ghali said a humanitarian review by UNFICYP showed that "the Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the northern part of the island are far from leading the normal life they were promised" under a 1975 agreement between the two sides.

"The limited measures that the Turkish Cypriot authorities have recently announced with a view to improving the daily lives of the persons concerned are welcome. At the same time, the measures highlight how much more needs to be done."

UNFICYP would pursue this matter with the Turkish Cypriot authorities and would "also follow up with the government of Cyprus on the measures it is taking to eliminate any discrimination against or harassment of the Turkish Cypriots living in the southern part of the island," he said.



OFF TO SCHOOL: An Egyptian father packs five children on his motorcycle to transport them to school in Cairo. Whole families can often be seen riding motorcycles in the congested streets of Cairo, which has a population of 15 million and where cars are very expensive (AFP photo)

Nablus rejoices, recalls bitter memory of Israeli occupation

NABLUS (AFP) — With automatic weapons fire, tank fire, horns, singing and fireworks, thousands of Palestinians celebrated in the early morning Tuesday the end of Israel's 28-year occupation of this largest West Bank town.

"I think I'm going to walk all night. To walk alone, with my family, when I want, where I want, it was my dream," said Ahmad Mohammad.

He was out in his pyjamas, bathrobe and house slippers when the early withdrawal of Israeli troops from this town of 130,000 residents began, which surprised many other Palestinians already in bed.

A joyous crowd of men, women, children and Palestinian police pressed around the large three-storey, white-stone building that was the Israeli army's former headquarters in Nablus.

Residents continued to circle the building despite the biting cold and drizzling rain, as several took shelter under the awnings of nearby stores.

Next to the former Israeli military headquarters, the now empty prison was visited and revisited throughout the

night, especially by former Palestinian prisoners and their families.

Khaled Mahmoud Abdul-lal, 41, pulled on the bell that had announced the end of the prisoners' family visits. He came with his two daughters and son. Mr. Abdul-lal served a seven-year prison sentence for anti-Israeli attacks and said he came back "to remember and express: his pain."

Alaa Alwawi, 20, spent two years in the prison for throwing stones. He was released after the signing of the Palestinian autonomy accords and now works in a bakery to feed his 12 sisters and two brothers.

The goal now is to "help the Palestinian authority govern in serenity," he said.

"Even if the Israelis left today like thieves, I have no more hate," he said, with tears in his eyes.

The military headquarters is completely empty, not even a piece of paper was left on the floor.

"The Israeli soldiers left the place very quickly, we took down their flag and raised our own. Everything

went orderly," said General Mohammad Ali Amleh, the man now in charge of the building.

After the transfer of power was complete, the Palestinian police wanted to burn the Israeli flag, but the rain prevented them. They instead tore it up and threw down the shreds to the cheering crowd, who seized them as precious trophies.

The Palestinian colours of black, red, white and green flew in the wind throughout the town, known for its "rock wars" led by young Palestinians against their occupiers. In haste, the merchants of Nablus put up banners welcoming the Palestinian police and celebrating the glory of Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat.

"Our banners are not very pretty, but we were caught by surprise because the army left two days early," said Jamal Ramzi.

The Israeli soldiers left Nablus late Monday, 48 hours before their scheduled withdrawal as part of an accord to extend Palestinian autonomy across the West Bank.

EU follows in tracks of Moses

SAINT CATHERINE, Egypt (AFP) — The European Union (EU) will follow in the footsteps of Moses and create a national park around Mount Sinai, the site where he is said to have received the Ten Commandments.

"In mid-1996, the EU will give Egypt a grant of six million ECUs (\$7.8 million) to transform this region into a national park," Stefan Zens, the EU environmental advisor in Cairo, told AFP.

Besides the 9,000 square-kilometre park, the money would also finance studies for the restoration of St. Catherine's monastery, Mr. Zens said.

The mountainous desert of central Sinai was the site of the burning bush through which God addressed Moses, Mount Sinai where he received the Ten Commandments and the spring where he met his wife after the Jewish exodus, according to the Bible.

"The money will go to found and equip a research centre to catalogue the plants

of the region and protect the animals, especially gazelles, from poachers," Ahmad Shehata from the Egyptian Environment Agency said.

The region is home to some 30 endemic plant species, including types useful in treating diabetes and other diseases, botanist Mohammad Al Qassas said.

Ten per cent of the grant will go to restoration of St. Catherine's, where cracks in the walls have grown since last November's earthquakes off the Sinai coast.

"The money will be for anyone who wishes to finance restoration. Our job is to open the way for a quick repair of the monastery which risks ruin," Mr. Zens said, adding that the EU itself could take up the work.

The Greek Orthodox monastery, which has a surviving wall dating back to the Roman Emperor Justinian (527 A.D.), features a Byzantine church and a library of more than 3,500 manuscripts.

"Restorations made over the centuries, mostly by the

monks have not kept cracks from appearing," said Michael Pearson, an EU expert in charge of several environment projects in the Sinai.

He also warned of the dangers of increased tourism to the monastery.

"There are currently between 1,500 and 3,000 tourists a day, but that could double with more and more hotels in the Sinai and tourism cooperation projects between Egypt, Jordan and Israel," Mr. Pearson said.

He proposed limiting the number of sightseers and building "a visitor's centre where some of the treasures would be displayed."

"Most of the tourists come not for religious reasons but to enjoy the site and its treasures, especially the icons and the burning bush," the EU expert added.

Mr. Pearson said he would prefer tourists pay for tickets to enter the monastery to help pay for restoration, but "the monks insist it is a place of worship open to all."

U.S. says it wants fair vote in Sahara

RABAT (R) — Washington would like to see a free and fair referendum in the Western Sahara to resolve the outstanding dispute between Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front, a U.S. official said on Monday.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, who is on a two-day visit to Morocco and was due to travel to Tunisia on Tuesday, also did not rule out a visit to Algeria "in the next few months, or weeks."

Mr. Pelletreau met King Hassan on Monday for talks he said covered the latest developments in the Middle East, economic relations, the Western Sahara, Algeria and Bosnia.

"We would like to see a free, fair and impartial referendum in Western Sahara to determine the preference of the people of the region," Mr. Pelletreau told a news conference.

He was asked if Washington would back direct dialogue between the two sides rather than a referendum, which has been delayed repeatedly by disputes over who is eligible to vote between Morocco and the independence-seeking Polisario Front.

"If a dialogue can advance that, then a dialogue would be useful but we do not ourselves propose anything beyond the U.N. secretary-general's plan," Mr. Pelletreau said.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali made new proposals to try to speed up the referendum process in the hope of meeting a January deadline for a vote and the Security Council is due to vote on the plan this week.

Turkey rejects PKK call

ANKARA (R) — Turkey on Tuesday rejected a ceasefire call by rebel Kurd leader Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan for this month's parliamentary elections.

"Turkey does not take seriously his (Ocalan's) call for a ceasefire," Interior Minister Teoman Unusan told Reuters.

"Apo just makes it up as he goes along — he is not a man to be taken seriously," Mr. Unusan said.

Mr. Ocalan, leader of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), called on the Turkish military on Monday to agree to a ceasefire during general polls due to take place on Dec. 24.

The PKK has been fighting for independence or autonomy in southeast Turkey since 1984. More than 18,000 people have been killed in the insurgency.

The rebels called a unilateral ceasefire in 1993, which held for nearly three months until the guerrillas killed 33 unarmed soldiers in a bus ambush after complaining Turkey had not reciprocated.

Mr. Ocalan has called for a ceasefire a few times since then but each time Turkey rejected his call, saying it refuses to deal with "terrorists."

Turkey is to go to the polls on Dec. 24. The People's Democracy Party, which advocates more rights for Turkey's estimated 10-15 million Kurds, is expected to do well in the southeast.

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PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 Inspector Gadget
14:30 Ghost Writer
15:00 Tomorrow's World
15:30 Amazing Stories
16:00 The Adventures of the Black Stallion

16:30 Sky Trackers
17:00 Fractals
17:30 Jeux
18:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 Anything for a Laugh
20:00 Doc — The Nature of Things
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 Star Trek
22:00 News in English
22:25 Law and Order
23:30 The Silk Road
00:30 Comedy — Second Thought

PRAYER TIMES

06:59 Fair
06:21 Dhuhr
11:29 Dhuhr
14:14 Asr
16:59 Maghrib
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swithestel, Tel. 810740

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with a chance of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. Winds will be northwesterly moderate and skies partly cloudy. In

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 4/11
Agaba 9/20
Desert 3/13
Jordan Valley 10/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 9 Agaba 18 Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent, Agaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 759300
Dr. Mukhlis Halasah 819220
Dr. Munther Al Oriani 779959
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 770336
Al Aqaba pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 636730
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmoukhi pharmacy 637600
Nairook pharmacy 636732
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896391
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 707111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 816015
Electric Power Company 636381

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 81381332
Khaldi Maternity J. Ann 64428116
Al-Khalil Maternity J. Ann 64424112
Jabal Amman Maternity 682362
Mulhas J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmoukhi 607071
Shmoukhi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 6612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 66224090
Amal Hospital 674165
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 091983323
Zarqa National Hospital 091983323
Ibn Sina Hospital 091986732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 091986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02127555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital 0212747101
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 030314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)532100, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:10 Larnaca (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:45 Istanbul (RJ)
17:55 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:05 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:25 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:45 Rome (RJ)
22:45 Agaba (RJ)
23:20 Beirut (RJ)
01:25 Amsterdam (RJ)
01:30 Athens (OAG)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
09:15 London (RJ)
10:40 Cairo (RJ)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
13:25 Agaba (RJ)
15:20 Sharjah (AH)
21:00 Aden (DY)
22:50 Larnaca (CY)
00:15 Amsterdam (KL)
01:00 Athens (OAG)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Half of Mideast gets unfit drinking water

BEIRUT (AFP) — Almost half of the population of the Middle East live off water that has not been treated properly, a representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) told a regional conference here on Monday. Abdul Hai Meshbal was addressing representatives from 21 countries gathered in the Lebanese capital for a conference on "Water, Sanitation and Supply." The conference, running until Friday, aims to draw up long-term strategies to increase water resources and to lay down guidelines for regional cooperation. "By the end of 1994, around 71 per cent of the population in the region received drinking water but only about 55 per cent were getting properly purified water," Mr. Meshbal said. "This means that 122 million people in the region have no access to purified water while 190 million are deprived of water purification stations," he said. Lebanon's representative, Bassam Jaber, warned that his country's reputation for rich water resources would be redundant by 2015. It would be forced to seek alternative sources. The states participating are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Iran rejects as 'baseless' German probe

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Tuesday rejected as "baseless" a murder probe against Information Minister Ali Fallahian by German federal prosecutors. Germany said the investigation concerned Mr. Fallahian's alleged role in the September 1992 murder of four Iranian Kurdish opposition activists in Berlin. However, an Information Ministry official on Tuesday told the Tehran Times: "The Iranian people and government will not forgive baseless accusations levelled against Iranian officials." Germany is Iran's biggest trading partner, and has been visited by Mr. Fallahian and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati in the past two years. The Tehran Times article was the first comment on the charges from Iran, which has yet to issue any formal reaction. "The baseless accusation is a result of attempts made by international Zionism to disturb Iranian-German relations," the paper said. "These attempts are the continuation of tumults created by some Bundestag members last month." The German parliament on Nov. 10 adopted a motion calling on the government to cancel a visit by Mr. Velayati after President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani welcomed the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Mr. Velayati was to have attended a conference on Islam and Europe, but the Bonn government cancelled the gathering after the Bundestag vote.

Amateur took picture of Rabin killing

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli amateur photographer captured the assassination last month of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on film, state radio reported Tuesday. The man, whose identity was not given, handed his film to a three-judge commission set up to carry out an investigation into the shooting of Mr. Rabin by a Jewish extremist. The man reportedly took the photographs from the roof of a department store located next to the Tel Aviv square where Mr. Rabin had attended a giant peace rally just before he was shot. The security forces charged with protecting Mr. Rabin came under intense criticism for failing to prevent right-wing nationalist Yigal Amir from shooting the prime minister at point-blank range as he left the rally. Ballistics experts quoted by the radio said the photographer's presence on the nearby rooftop showed that someone armed with a rifle and telescopic sight also could have shot Mr. Rabin with relative ease. To date, no pictures of the actual shooting of Mr. Rabin have been published, although video images taken shortly before and after the killing have been broadcast.

Egypt: Muslim states seek Bosnia peace role

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Tuesday Muslim countries supported the peace deal on Bosnia to be signed in Paris on Thursday and that they will ask to participate in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission. Mr. Musa told reporters before leaving for Paris that Muslim countries would continue to support the U.S.-brokered agreement since it was initiated and accepted by the Bosnian government. He said a contact group formed by Islamic countries on Bosnia will hold a meeting in Paris and will later meet the U.S.-led international contact group to decide how they could take part in the peace mission. Mr. Musa said each Islamic country would be responsible for financing the troops it was willing to deploy in Bosnia. The contact group includes officials from Morocco, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Senegal, Egypt and Malaysia.

Syrian airlines to fly Larnaca-Madrid route

NICOSIA (AFP) — Syrian Arab Airlines is to start a weekly Larnaca-Madrid service under an agreement with Cyprus Airways, the Cypriot national carrier said Monday. A Boeing 727 with a capacity of 165 seats will be used, it said, without giving a date for the start of the service, aimed at developing "a new tourist market."

Security Council okays Japan's role in Golan

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council on Monday authorised Japanese troops to join a U.N. force on the Golan Heights. The Security Council agreed to a proposal from U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali to add Japan to the list of nations supplying troops to the force, the U.N. said in a statement. More than 1,000 U.N. troops police the separation of Israeli and Syrian forces on Golan Heights, 458 from Austria, 214 from Canada and 354 from Poland. Reports from Tokyo suggest that Japan would send at least 100 soldiers to replace the Canadian contingent in February.

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Dep. Amman 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Lower/lower price in fils per kg
Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Banana (imported) 670/650
Cabbage 110/70
Carrot 300/200
Cauliflower 130/80
Cucumbers (large) 180/120
Cucumbers (small) 280/200
Eggplant 200/120
Garlic 230/150
Grape Fruit 750/500
Lemon 230/150
Marrow (large) 150/100
Marrow (small) 270/150
Onion (green) 220/150
Onion (dry) 250/170
Orange 540/400
Pepper (hot) 240/150
Pepper (sweet) 240/150
Potato 270/180
Radish 140/80
Spinach 130/80
String Bean 300/200
Tangerine 280/200
Tomato 220/130



REFORM PROGRAMME REVIEW: Planning Minister Rima Khalaf Tuesday reviews Jordan's economic reform programme for the years 1996-1998 with a delegation of Jordanian businessmen, headed by Hamdi Tabba'a. Also reviewed were economic issues, such as the banking sector, foreign trade, and the privatisation strategy in Jordan. Dr. Khalaf stressed the importance of revitalising the role of the private sector with a view to enhancing its contribution to the national economy. In a reference to foreign competition, Mrs. Khalaf said such competition should motivate the private sector to play a more active role in the investment projects in the country, taking advantage of the opportune and encouraging economic climate. She noted that the government has not so far made any commitments to foreign companies or institutions to carry out investment projects in Jordan. She called for bridging the gap in the viewpoints of both the private and public sectors and to come up with policies designed to serve national interests (Petra photo)

Minister stresses need for integrated organisation of tourist services

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nearly one million visitors from outside the Arab World visited Jordan during 1995, registering a 40 per cent increase over the number of visitors in 1994, according to Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdullah Khatib Tuesday.

Speaking at a meeting organised by the Friends of Archaeology Society (FAS) in Jordan, the minister said on some days up to one thousand visitors converge on Wadi Rum in southern Jordan, something which has been unprecedented and which requires better organisation of the tourist services in that particular area.

The area started to witness a great increase in the number of visitors following the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in October of last year, said the minister.

The minister stressed need for integrated services for visitors in Wadi

Rum and announced the formation of a special committee grouping representatives of various government ministries and public and private organisations to work out a plan for the management of tourist services in Wadi Rum.

The ministry of tourism encourages the private sector to initiate tourism-related projects in Wadi Rum which has been attracting the interest of visitors from around the world, added the minister.

Ghazi Bisheh, head of the antiquities department expressed the view that tourism in Jordan cannot be developed without the participation of local communities.

FAS President Rami Khouri outlined the society's activities and endeavours to help protect archaeological sites and pointed out that society members will continue cooperat-

ing with ministry officials to safeguard antiquities and artefacts found in Wadi Rum and other archaeological sites.

He reiterated the need for the public and private sectors to join in the course of preserving the national heritage of archaeological and historic places which are witnessing a great boom in tourism.

Several Wadi Rum local community leaders attended the meeting and called for concerted efforts to develop tourism in the region.

They called for the employment of local residents in tourism services activities and support and for the provision of assistance to the local cooperative society.

Ministry officials have predicted that Jordan will earn a total of JD 850 million compared to JD 600 million in the past year.

Editor testifies in Abu Rishteh case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The editor of Al Hiwar newspaper, testifying Tuesday in the case of Muslim militant Atta Abu Rishteh, told the State Security Court that he published an interview with Mr. Abu Rishteh because he saw no Royal family names in the interview.

Mr. Abu Rishteh, 53, accused of belonging to an illegal organisation and of slandering against His Majesty King Hussein following an interview that was published in the Arabic weekly, Al Hiwar on Oct. 6, pleaded innocent to both charges. During the 15-minute

session, Abdullah Mohammad Bani Issa, told the court that he took a quick look at Mr. Abu Rishteh's interview and searched for Royal family members' names but found none, and thus decided to publish the interview.

The State Prosecutor General's charge sheet said Mr. Abu Rishteh, a spokesman of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir, made several remarks in the interview which were slanderous to the King.

Mr. Abu Rishteh's attorneys had contested these allegations in a previous court session, stating that Mr. Abu Rishteh reflected political thoughts and what

he said was based on interpretations of Islamic Sharia.

Mr. Abu Rishteh was apprehended in his office in Ruseifeh by authorities on Oct. 15, nine days after he was interviewed by the newspaper.

Presiding Judge Hafez Amin postponed the hearing to Wednesday (today) when Mr. Bani Issa will testify again concerning a letter that was sent to him by Mr. Abu Rishteh after the interview was published in the newspaper.

A sentence is expected to be announced after two court sessions. If found guilty, Mr. Abu Rishteh could receive up to three

years imprisonment.

Also Tuesday, the State Security Court postponed the case of six people accused of sabotage, to Dec. 16 because an explosives expert, who was to testify for the prosecution, failed to show up in court.

On Dec. 10, the expert witness appeared in court but without the explosives (the evidence) seized when the authorities apprehended the suspects.

The six people known as "Islamic revivalists" are accused of illegally possessing and manufacturing explosive materials, automatic weapons and guns for illegal use, and belonging to an illegal organisation.

Minister says social efforts must seek newer horizons

CAIRO (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri said Tuesday that social activities should seek new horizons to enable them to upgrade performance, and to play more significant roles in the fields of the environment, respect of human rights as well as to dissuade Arab intellectuals from settling abroad.

Speaking at the opening of the 15th session of the Arab Social Affairs Ministers Council which opened Tuesday in Cairo, Mrs. Damen-Masri said available energies and genuine will are the best guarantees in the face of challenges to the Arab nation.

She called for greater efforts in voluntary efforts and to direct existing ones towards social action in the Arab World.

Mrs. Damen-Masri noted that Arab capabilities were evident in the deliberations of the social summit held in Copenhagen and in the active participation in the Beijing women's conference, both held earlier this year.

The minister paid tribute to the coordination efforts among Arab countries manifested in the two recommendations after the Beijing conference which requested all Arab countries to be registered in one list at the United Nations social affairs.

The second recommendation, she said, was to continue coordination after the conference to draw up unified programmes and mechanisms in all social efforts.

Aftershocks are declining, situation is reassuring, says Aqaba governor

AQABA (J.T.) — The earthquake that hit Aqaba Monday registering 5.5 on the Richter Scale prompted a meeting Tuesday attended by various private and public organisations and other concerned parties in the city to discuss and review preparedness to deal with the consequences of the recurrent tremors.

Chairing the meeting, Faysal Khasawneh, the acting governor of Aqaba, urged closer cooperation and coordination on the part of the various organisations and voluntary groups with the civil defence department.

He said the need for efforts to fight baseless rumours and allay the local inhabitants' fears of tremors was necessary. He said this could be done through the help of the local media.

Dr. Khasawneh said the

earthquake, which occurred on Nov. 22, measuring 6.2 on the Richter Scale was the major quake and that subsequent ones were merely aftershocks.

He said the situation was reassuring and that there was no need for panic.

Geophysicists told the Jordan Times that the Monday quake which registered 5.5 on the Richter Scale had its centre located 120 kilometres south of Aqaba. He also said the aftershocks were gradually declining.

The CDD and other concerned departments have distributed pamphlets to schools, factories and other organisations providing advice and instructions to the public on what to do during earthquakes.

Meanwhile, Dr. Khasawneh Tuesday chaired the opening session of a two-day meeting organised by the UN Higher Commis-

sion for Refugees (UNHCR) to review international documents dealing with refugees as well as the International Humanitarian Law and the right of persons to request asylum in the Kingdom.

Dr. Khasawneh told the 26 participants that Jordan has been hosting refugees over the past five decades. He also paid tribute to the UNHCR's services to the refugees.

Zubaidah Haseem, the resident UNHCR representative in Jordan outlined her office's activities and noted that the UNHCR has been closely cooperating with non-governmental organisations like the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, the International Commission of the Red Cross, as well as charitable organisations.

Education official says more schools are needed in Aqaba

AQABA (J.T.) — An official from the Ministry of Education Tuesday said there was a shortage in school buildings in Aqaba, causing congestion in the classrooms, and urged the ministry to build more schools in the city.

The shortage is being increasingly felt in view of the 8.5 per cent annual increase in the number of students who enroll at the schools in the port city and the Aqaba governorate, the official, Mohammad Zewiri said.

He said the total number of schools in the governorate now stands at 70, and 51 of those are run by the Ministry of Education, 13 by the private sector and six by the Jordanian Armed Forces Educational Department.

Mr. Zewiri said there was need for an additional eight schools for boys and girls in Aqaba and added that other areas were in need of at least 60 classrooms to cater to the increases in student population.

He said the increases in student population were due to new inhabitants in the Red Sea resort city and to the settlement of bedouins in villages around the town.

As a temporary measure, the official said, the department has been allowing schools to run two shifts to make up for the shortage of school buildings, particularly for primary stage students. Mr. Zewiri pointed out that at least 40 students are being seated in each class in most of the government schools.

According to Ziyad Ja'abari, a headmaster at a local school, the students in the two shift schools face hardships starting classes as early as 6:20 a.m., while the teachers find it hard to work in the afternoon shift, particularly in the hot season.

Mr. Jabbari said that the ideal classroom should not seat more than 30 students if the learning process is to be successful.

At the beginning of the current scholastic year the Ministry of Education said that nearly 1.315 million students at different stages started attending classes in 58,000 schools run by the ministry and the private sector as well as the Jordanian Armed Forces and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

'Free trade agreements should be preceded by acquisition of scientific knowledge'

MADABA (Petra) — The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC) Tuesday called on various chambers in Jordan to streamline their activities with the new trend in the national Jordanian economy and play a key role in stimulating investments and trade.

The call was made by the federation's chairman Haidar Murad in an address to the opening session of the annual federation meeting held at Ishtar Hotel at the Ma'in Spa south of Madaba, attended by representatives of various chambers of commerce in the

Kingdom.

"After outlining the federation's contributions and participation in the Amman economic summit and the Barcelona meeting, Mr. Murad said future cooperation between European nations and countries around the Mediterranean Sea, including Jordan, requires among other things, the creation of a free trade zone by the year 2010.

He said Jordan should rise to the occasion and cater to the needs of the new stage in its relations with Europe.

"Opening our doors for free trade should be preceded

ed by the acquisition of scientific knowledge for ourselves as well as the commitment to internationally accepted standards and specifications and the improvement on our part of the quality of products because competition in the free markets will not be a bed of roses," Mr. Murad said.

"To help achieve that goal and enable Jordan to be competitive in world markets, the chambers of commerce in the country have to make their own contributions and to do so, they can benefit from the information centre, based at

the federation's headquarters," he said.

Mr. Murad said the centre provides sufficient and important information for merchants, importers and exporters and businessmen with the names and addresses of international companies and business firms outside Jordan.

During the meeting the participants reviewed the federation's activities of the past year, a budget for 1996 and discussed a number of matters related to chambers of commerce and means for further stimulating their work.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mosque to undergo JD 3.85m renovation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Commission for the Restoration of the Prophet Mohammad's Companions Mosques and Tombs and a local contracting company Tuesday signed a JD 3.85 million agreement for the renovation of Abu Ubaida Amer Ben Al Jarrah mosque in the northern Jordan Valley. The agreement was signed for the Commission by its chairman, Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, the Chief Chamberlain. Director General Hassan Hawamdeh signed the agreement for his company. Under the agreement the contracting company will build a comprehensive compound at the tomb sites, and conduct maintenance to the minaret of the mosque. Head of the Ministry of Awqaf's construction and maintenance department Mohammad Shomali said the design of the new Abu Ubaida compound, including the mosque, took into consideration the various religious, developmental, social and economic dimensions. The design also took into consideration Islamic architectural designs, Mr. Shomali said. He added that the compound includes a major prayer area, including one for women, a basin surrounded by columns and arches, a library, a school and a house for teaching Koran.

Transport team leaves for Russia

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian transport delegation, headed by director of the Land Transport Department Abdullah Jhour today leaves for Russia and Hungary to hold talks with Russian and Hungarian officials on fees collected by customs officials in these countries from Jordanian refriger-

ated trucks crossing into these countries. In a statement to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Mr. Jhour said Jordan and Hungary are governed by a land transport agreement, organising movement of trucks in both countries. However, he said, the case is different with Russia where there is no such agreement governing land transport. He noted that refrigerated trucks carrying Jordanian plates pay an amount ranging between \$900 and \$1600 according to the road they use within the Russian boundaries. Mr. Jhour said recent years have witnessed an increase in Jordanian exports, mainly agricultural exports to these countries, a matter calling for better organising land transport between Jordan and those countries.

RJ officials evaluate sales activities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Jordanian (RJ) regional directors and senior officers Sunday meet here to evaluate RJ sales and marketing activities inside and outside Jordan, and to discuss the RJ operation plan for the year 1996, according to Majdi Sabri, deputy director general for marketing and sales. Dr. Sabri said the RJ's board director Walid Kurdi and Chief Executive officer Nader Dahabi will address RJ's 32nd conference, and will brief participants on the airline's future plans and aspirations in light of the structural changes in the airline industry worldwide. The conference will be preceded by a three-day workshop in which RJ regional directors, and representatives of the various departments will take place. The workshop seeks to assess marketing and sales methods and to agree on a work plan geared to cope with the new changes in the field of airline industry and ensure a cut in expenditure and increased revenues.

FILM

* "Bhaji on the Beach" at the British Council at 7.00 p.m.

* Screening of the best European and Arab commercials at the French Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

LECTURES

* Information session on CPA qualifications and the Becker preparatory course at Forte Grand Hotel on Wednesday 13 Dec. at 7.00 p.m. and Friday 15 Dec. at 4.00 p.m.

* "Boundaries, Roads and Farms of Ancient Gerasa" by Jacques Seigne at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6.30 p.m.

* "Contemporary German Art in the Ludwig Collection and the Projects of Ludwig Forum" by Prof. Wolfgang Becker, director of

Ludwig Museum, Aachen, Germany at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 5.30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by artist Hind Nasser at Darat Al Funun (until Jan. 6).
* Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4).

* Photography exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre. (Until Dec. 30).

CHRISTMAS SALE

* Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassieh (includes Christmas items, table mats, baskets, wall-hangings, candle-holders and side-lamps) at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

Russian candidate survives assassination bid in Caucasus

MOSCOW (AFP) — Unidentified gunmen opened fire on the car of an independent candidate in the Russian parliamentary elections early Tuesday as he was driving home in Essentuki in the northern Caucasus but he was unscathed. Interfax News Agency reported.

Alexander Kashcheyev told Interfax that shots were fired at his car from another car parked near his home at around 2:00 a.m. (2300 GMT Monday). Two bullet holes were later found in his car, he said.

Yuri Shein, the Interior Ministry chief in Essentuki, confirmed the shooting incident Tuesday, saying a window had been shattered in Mr. Kashcheyev's car and inside there were indications that shots had been fired from a hunting rifle.

Mr. Kashcheyev, who is campaigning in a district which includes the city of Mineralnye Vody, said he believed the incident was linked to his criticism of the local mafia and its connections with the leadership of the Stavropol region.

He said newspapers in Stavropol had recently published articles in which he criticised the local authorities.

He had received several threats against his family, he said, and one of his car's brake cables was severed.

Mr. Kashcheyev runs a construction company called Nuklon.

The attack was the latest in a series of shootings targeting candidates in the

Dec. 17 elections to the State Duma (lower house).

Mikhail Lezhnev, a candidate for the centrist bloc Our Home Is Russia, was found shot dead Friday outside his home in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk.

He was the fourth Duma deputy to die violently in the past 19 months, and the second in a month.

Meanwhile Russian opinion pollsters are getting cold feet ahead of Sunday's parliamentary elections, faced with the difficulty of sampling trends across 11 time zones and a volatile society still going through the birth pains of democracy and the free market.

In the last general elections on Dec. 12, 1993, ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy shocked forecasters by storming to first place in the proportional ballot with a massive eleventh-hour swing netting him 23 per cent of the votes.

Two years later, Russian pollsters are hedging their bets.

"There is so much uncertainty that I'm not risking any forecasts" for Sunday's elections, said Alexander Osion, director of the Foundation For Public Opinion, one of Russia's leading polling institutes.

Leonid Sedov, deputy director of Vtsiom, another top institute, said it was "still a matter for debate" whether public opinion existed in Russia.

For 70 years, the expression of public opinion was suppressed under the Soviet

regime, and as a result many Russians are still reluctant to voice public opinion and dissent, Mr. Sedov said.

For example, the army's assault on the Russian parliament building to crush a rebellion in October 1993 and the brutal war waged in Chechnya since December 1994 have met with relative apathy from a large portion of the Russian population.

The traditional absence of democracy and public debate has produced a mass of voters whose opinions are unsophisticated and volatile — a tough challenge for the polling institutes.

"The same individual can tell us that he is voting for Zhirinovskiy and that he respects (former Soviet dissident) Andrei Sakharov more than anybody else in the world — essentially an incoherent response," said Mr. Sedov.

Political sociology is still in its infancy in Russia.

The Vtsiom Institute, a pioneer in the field, was only set up in 1988 by a Soviet Communist Party which belatedly started taking an interest in the opinions of the people it ruled.

Mr. Sedov said former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was "the first to try to carry out reforms by taking account of public opinion."

Originally funded by official trade unions and the Labour Ministry, Vtsiom later became independent, and its main clients now are companies who use its marketing surveys to test their

target consumers.

Russian polling institutes are still far from their Western counterparts in terms of resources, with Vtsiom's 80 employees packed into cramped quarters with peeling walls in the city centre.

However, institutes are becoming more professional and gaining credibility, and like Russians elsewhere they are quickly mastering Western methods.

The leading institutes take national samples of at least 1,600 people, questioned by telephone at home.

The pollsters have learnt their lesson from the shock success of Mr. Zhirinovskiy in the 1993 vote, making their surveys more representative by including more people living in the Russian hinterland or on the edge of society.

The Foundation for Public Opinion has perfected a computer model which through a series of comparisons "helps us to gauge the political views of those who don't voice them," said Osion, proudly displaying the diskette containing the magic programme.

With 43 movements and parties in the line-up for the Dec. 17 elections, the pollsters know that their credibility is at stake.

While predicting a victory for the Communist Party they have stressed that only just over one-third of the electorate has decided how to vote.



Moscow Muslims pray holding the Koran and a poster saying "Elections under the guns' thunder is a farce" on Lubyanskaya Square, marking the anniversary of the beginning of the war in Chechnya (AFP photo)

Opponents of Chechen war mark anniversary

MOSCOW (R) — Russian opponents of the Kremlin's war in Chechnya gathered in Moscow to mark the first anniversary of the conflict and rally their liberal supporters ahead of next Sunday's parliamentary elections.

"Starting a war is very easy. Stopping it is much harder," Yegor Gaidar, leader of the Liberal Democratic Choice of Russia bloc, told the meeting in central Moscow Monday.

He described the year-long conflict as a blow not just for Chechnya but also for Russian democracy, and said President Boris Yeltsin had to bear the main responsibility for "this terrible tragedy."

Despite the war's unpopularity in Russia, Mr. Gaidar said it had undermined the political position of liberal reformers in the country. "We were not strong enough to stop it," he said.

"If we had really gone out on the streets in force a year ago, we could have stopped it," said Sergei Yushenkov, another opponent of the war who is head of the outgoing parliament's Defence Committee.

Mr. Gaidar, an unknown economist, was plucked from obscurity by Mr. Yeltsin four years ago to spearhead Russia's drive to a market economy. He finally quit the government after elections two years ago led to a slowdown in reforms and broke decisively with Mr. Yeltsin over Chechnya.

The war in the small north Caucasus republic, effectively still under way at a lower level of intensity, has cost the lives of more than 2,600 Russian servicemen and an estimated 40,000 civilians. The regional capital Grozny is still largely in ruins.

Three-star General Eduard Vorobyov, who was forced out of the army after refusing to command the Chechnya assault, told the meeting of around 1,000 Gaidar supporters: "Today it is clear this war should never have been started."

Gen. Vorobyov is standing as a candidate for the State Duma on Mr. Gaidar's party list. The party faces a tough struggle to

clear the five per cent minimum hurdle to make sure it enters the lower house.

Russia's leading human rights advocate Sergei Kovalev told the meeting: "This is not just a crisis for Chechnya, it is a crisis of federal power, a crisis gripping your country and mine."

Russian authorities moved extra troops and police into Moscow to patrol the centre and keep guard on public buildings against surprise raids by Chechen separatists.

The Moscow rally coincided with a noisy demonstration by around 10,000 supporters of Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on the streets of Grozny, as Russian tanks and helicopters patrolled.

The rally passed without incident although later in the evening Interfax News Agency reported a half-hour gunbattle in the city around the Russian military headquarters.

Mr. Dudayev, in hiding in the mountains, has vowed to disrupt the voting next Sunday. Russian Khasbulatov, the former Russian parliament head, pulled out of the race Saturday, saying the election threatened a shaky truce in place since July.

That left Moscow-appointed leader Doku Zavgayev as the only serious contender, rendering the ballot all but meaningless.

But the head of the local Electoral Commission said voting would definitely go ahead and forecast a turnout of 60 per cent.

Of 420 polling stations throughout Chechnya, 398 were ready, Abdul-Kerim Arsakhanov told Reuters. But their locations were being kept secret for now to limit the risk of attacks.

Few local people seem willing to vote, however, and the possibility of staging an election in rebel territory seems remote.

Mr. Kovalev told the Moscow rally it was impossible to have a free vote in Chechnya with military patrols and roadblocks. "This election is a provocation," he said Moscow was in effect demanding unconditional surrender by the Chechens.

5 killed in Karachi as funerals create tension

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Three people were shot dead in a gunbattle in the Pakistani city of Karachi Tuesday shortly before the funerals of two slain relatives of ethnic party leader Altaf Hussain, police said.

The bodies of Mr. Hussain's brother Nasir, 60, and nephew Arif, 28, were found tortured and shot dead in Karachi Saturday.

Ambulance workers said gunmen had killed an unidentified youth in separate firing in the city's Taimouria area Tuesday, and police reported another death in Orangi town.

Witnesses said the shootout between police and gunmen took place in district central's Liaquatabad area when police tried to stop supporters of the ethnic Mawjohid National Movement (MQM) from going to the funeral of Mr. Hussain's brother and nephew.

But police said four gunmen in a taxi attacked a police armoured personnel carrier, whose occupants had returned fire, killing three of the assailants and wounding the fourth.

Ambulance men said they had been unable to enter Liaquatabad where they said heavy gunfire was continuing.

Police denied preventing mourners from reaching the central Azadiabad area, the venue for the funerals, but said they had mounted a heavy security operation for the event.

Witnesses said police and paramilitary Rangers had

sealed off all roads leading to the funeral site.

"They are not allowing any buses and other heavy vehicles into the district," one witness said, adding that many mourners had been forced to disembark from buses halted at barricades set up by security forces and walk the rest of the way.

Tension mounted in the city and all schools and markets closed in districts central and east for fear of violence.

The MQM accused the security forces of killing Mr. Hussain's relatives in revenge for the Nov. 23 assassination of the brother of Sind province Chief Minister Abdullah Shah.

The government has denied that security forces murdered Nasir and Arif Hussain and has ordered a judicial inquiry. The MQM says its men did not kill Mr. Shah's brother.

The MQM called a two-day protest strike that paralysed most activity in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, Sunday and Monday, but called off a third strike day Tuesday so that transport would be available to take people to the funerals.

More than 1,800 people have died in ethnic and sectarian violence in the sprawling southern port this year.

The government says Mr. Hussain is orchestrating the unrest from London, where he has been living in self-exile since 1992. The MQM accuses security agencies of persecuting its members.



Princess Diana (left) is met by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as she arrives at a Black-tie benefit gala in New York. At the gala the princess was presented with an award for her charity work (AFP photo)

Diana receives U.S. award

NEW YORK (R) — Princess Diana, apparently mindful of last week's criticism from British legislators, said in a speech Monday night that a government's role in humanitarian work needed more recognition.

The Princess of Wales joined an honour roll including former U.S. presidents, New York governors and other powerful figures in receiving the United Cerebral Palsy of New York's Humanitarian Award for her efforts on behalf of philanthropic groups.

In a 10-minute acceptance speech to 2,000 guests at the \$1,000 a plate dinner hosted by the New York charity, the princess also said she wanted to share her award with people in the caring professions, such as doctors and nurses.

"Perhaps there is not enough recognition given, perhaps we are too quick to criticise those who govern and too slow to praise them when they do address the social needs that are apparent to all of us," she told dinner guests.

Organisers said the event raised \$2.1 million for research, programmes and services for sufferers of cerebral palsy, a devastating brain disease, a record for the charity.

Last week, a speech she made on behalf of the homeless in Britain while sharing a platform with a leading opposition figure drew criticism from British government legislators. Some said her appearance with the Labour Party politician undermined the constitutional impartiality of the monarchy.

The princess, introduced by a past recipient, the former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, shared the awards with Gen. Colin Powell, the former U.S. chairman of the Joint Chiefs Of Staff who considered running for president in 1996. Gen. Powell received the organisation's award for leadership and long public service.

"This room would not be large enough to accommodate all of those who should be here tonight," said the princess, who has said she makes secret night visits to patients in hospitals. "I'm sure you'll forgive me if I feel that I must share this award with others. Nonetheless, I am extremely grateful."

It was the princess's first appearance in the United States since declaring in a British television interview last month that she wanted to be Britain's "queen of hearts". She arrived Monday and returns home Tuesday.

Castro makes first-ever trip to Japan

TOKYO (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro arrived in Japan Tuesday for his first-ever visit, an unofficial, 20-hour stopover during which he is slated to meet the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister.

Mr. Castro's meetings with Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono Wednesday mark the first top-level bilateral meeting since the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Foreign Ministry officials said Tuesday.

Mr. Castro arrived on a Cuban government jet from Vietnam after wrapping up visits there and in China.

No Japanese leader or cabinet minister has visited

Cuba since the revolution, the Foreign Ministry officials said.

The Foreign Ministry official said Mr. Kono will likely raise with Mr. Castro the issues of Cuba's democratisation and transition to a market economy — issues which Mr. Kono touched on in a meeting with his Cuban counterpart Roberto Robaina during the Cuban official's visit to Tokyo last January.

The biggest issue hampering modern ties between Tokyo and Havana is Cuba's outstanding debt of \$2 billion to Japan, one ministry official said. No payment has been made since the debt was last rescheduled in 1989, he said.

Cuba and Japan established diplomatic ties in 1929, they said.

A Japanese business delegation visited Havana last month and said the debt issue impeded progress on trade and investment.

"If the Cuban president makes any specific proposals to resolve the issue, it would be a step forward in improving relations," the official said.

Between meetings with Mr. Kono and Mr. Murayama, Mr. Castro is to attend a luncheon hosted by the Japan-Cuban Parliamentary League, headed by former Foreign Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka, the officials said.

Cuba and Japan established diplomatic ties in 1929, they said.

Witnesses said thousands of activists of the BNP's student and labour movements marched to the rally brandishing banners and placards, and many clutched sheafs of rice paddy, the BNP's election symbol, in their hands.

Opposition parties were expected to announce a new protest agenda Tuesday, including another strike on Dec. 17, the last day for registering to enter the January polls.

Abdus Salam Tudeker, secretary-general of the BNP, said in a newspaper statement he still hoped a compromise would be found through negotiations.

British Santas to get American 'ho ho ho' class

LONDON (R) — Santa Claus is being flown in especially from the United States to teach British father Christmas masses to be more jolly. Tom Valent, who has spent 20 years training Santas at what is billed as the oldest Santa school in the world, has been hired by the 130-store British catalogue shop chain Index. "He will run a one-day school for our applicants teaching them how to get the laugh right and the other do's and don'ts of the job," an Index spokesman told the Times newspaper. "British children are often left cold by characters who look more like Santa flaws than Santa Claus. We wanted the best Father Christmas in the world to help do it properly," the spokesman said of Valent, who is from Michigan.

Britons lavish Christmas presents on dogs

LONDON (R) — Seven out of 10 British dogs will be treated to a present under the Christmas tree this year, a survey showed Tuesday. The pet gift market is now worth nearly \$300 million (\$460.3 million) and is growing at 10 per cent a year, Go and Housekeeping magazine said. Britons are renowned as doting pet owners and their gifts this year could range from beef-flavoured sponge cakes to a \$750 (\$1,150) diamond-studded dog collar on sale at the exclusive department store Harrod's. The humpy toy is offered as the perfect gift for dogs who get "over-passionate" with cushions and furniture.

Replica of Cook's ship upsets Maoris

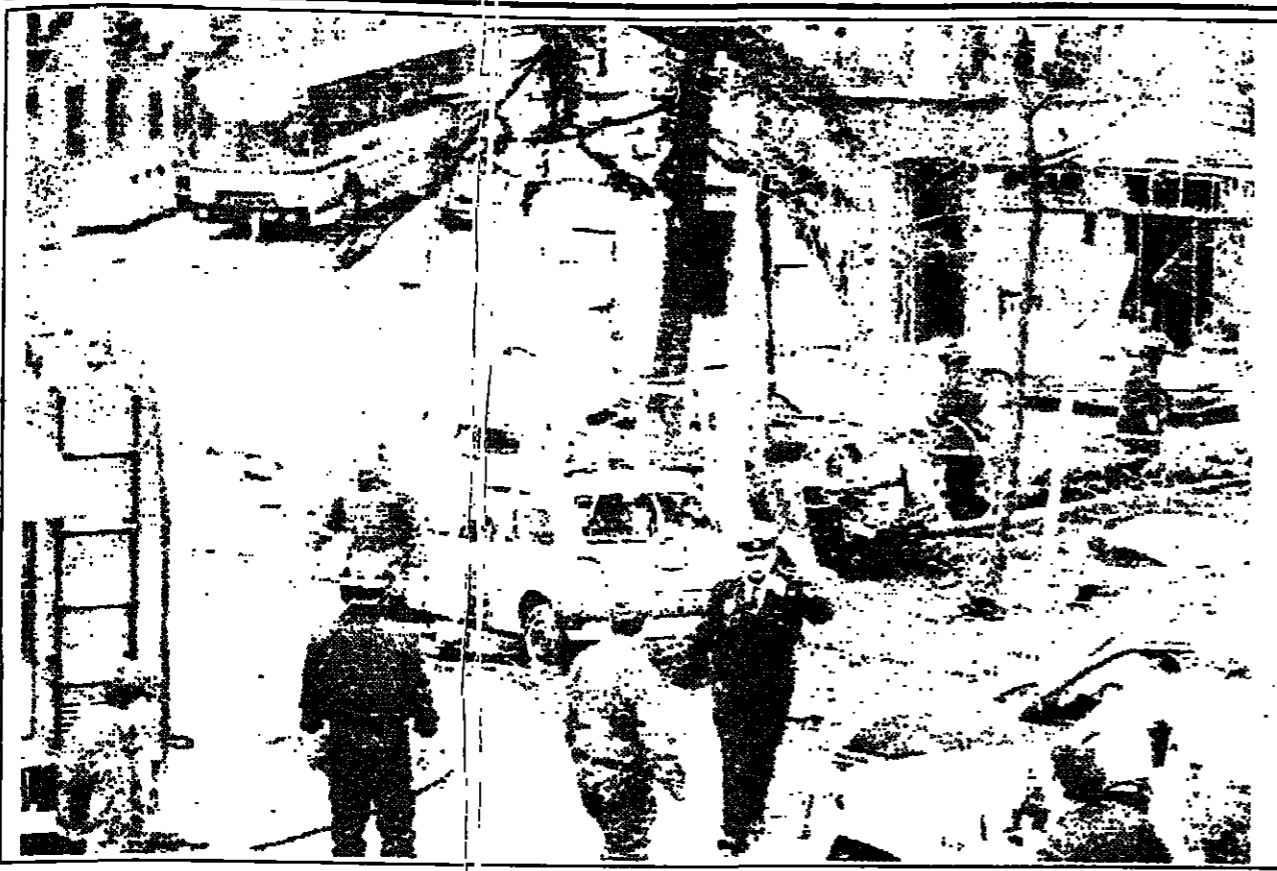
WELLINGTON (R) — A visit to New Zealand by a replica of Captain James Cook's sailing ship the Endeavour has reopened racial wounds, 225 years after the vessel first anchored here. The \$11.6 million replica of the Endeavour arrived in New Zealand from Australia Saturday to a warm welcome from Prime Minister Jim Bolger and Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard. But some Maori elders in Gisborne on the east coast of the North Island urged the Endeavour not to visit their region because of what they called "atrocities" inflicted on Maoris by British explorer Cook and his men.

Phil Collins tops pop millionaires in survey

LONDON (R) — Phil Collins emerged as British rock and roll's top earner last year in a survey of how much they make. The top 10 was dominated by ageing stars with the 44-year-old Collins leading the field with earnings of \$24.2 million (\$37 million), according to the survey by music industry analyst Cliff Dane. Next came the 48-year-old Elton John with \$12.65 million (\$19.4 million) followed by Eric Clapton, Sting and Annie Lennox. David Bowie, Rod Stewart and the Rolling Stones did not appear in the pop millionaire charts because their finances are based abroad, Dane explained.

Brunei saves crowns and Bible for Britain

LONDON (R) — The brother of the Sultan of Brunei donated to Britain three royal crowns and a coronation Bible that had been the centre of an export row. The crowns and Bibles, worth about \$1.7 million (\$2.60 million), had been the target of eager bidding from foreign buyers.



Police and firemen inspect the site where a car bomb exploded on the outskirts of Madrid. Five people were killed in the ETA attack (AFP photo)

ETA sends warning to Spain ahead of EU summit

MADRID (AFP) — With its bloody bomb attack in Madrid four days before an EU summit in the Spanish capital, the Basque separatist group ETA has sent a clear signal to the government that it remains a force to be reckoned with, police said Tuesday.

Six people — all military civil servants — were killed Monday and about a dozen injured in the deadliest explosion of its kind in Spain in 2-1/2 years.

The death toll could even go higher as one of the wounded was fighting for his life Tuesday and four others were in serious condition.

By detonating the bomb just four days before European Union (EU) leaders are due to open a two-day summit here, ETA served notice that, despite recent successes by the anti-terrorist police, the sepa-

ratists still retained a solid infrastructure in the city, where they have traditionally mounted their most spectacular raids, police and the press said.

Press reports quoted some police officials as saying that Monday's attack was part of a new "terrorist campaign" launched by ETA last Nov. 10 in the western city of Salamanca where a car bomb seriously wounded an army captain.

They said the campaign could be linked to the legislative elections — scheduled for next March — which the conservative Popular Party (PP) is widely expected to win after 13 years of Socialist rule.

Thousands of Madrid residents observed five minutes of silence Tuesday in memory of the victims, heeding a call from city hall. Several radio stations interrupted their pro-

grammes and civil servants filed out of their offices to take part in the silent protest.

Madrid Mayor Jose Maria Alvarez Del Manzano decreed that Tuesday would be a day of mourning in the city where flags were flying at half mast.

Defense Minister Gustavo Suarez Pertierra was to attend the funeral for the victims later in the day.

In the Basque country, the pacifist group Gesto For La Paz also sponsored hundreds of protest demonstrations across the region.

It is not the first time that ETA struck at a "symbolic" date.

On June 12, 1985, the day Spain signed its admission to the European economic community, ETA, which is fighting for the independence of the northern Basque region, killed two soldiers and a policeman in

separate attacks.

The daily El Pais noted in an editorial that such spectacular attacks covered by hundreds of journalists "are always a prized encouragement for the killers who practice propaganda through action."

In recent years, anti-terrorist police have dismantled dozens of ETA cells.

"ETA rears to greet the PP," said the Catalan daily La Vanguardia, explaining that the ETA offensive aimed at "forcing a dialogue" with the conservatives who are tipped to gain power next year.

But the PP and the entire political establishment have rejected such a dialogue.

"Terrorists must understand that their barbarism will meet with no other response than law and police efficiency," PP leader Jose Maria Aznar warned.

N. Korea warns against U.S. military adventurism

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korea Tuesday said it would take "countermeasures" against U.S. military manoeuvres with South Korea and Japan, accusing Washington of plotting an attack.

"Now that the United States is scheming to bring the military adventure against our system into practice together with South Korea and Japan, we cannot but feel exposed to threat and will unavoidably have to take countermeasures," the North's Foreign Ministry warned in a statement.

It did not say what the countermeasures would be, but denounced U.S. and South Korean troops for staging a massive joint air exercise targeting the North in December.

The North's warning, carried by its official mouthpiece Korean Central News Agency, came with South Korean Armed Forces on a five-month alert against any attack from North Korea.

On Tuesday, the military

here announced plans for a massive air raid drill Friday in and around Seoul to test South Korea's readiness against North Korean air attacks.

On Monday, South Korean President Kim Young-Sam said the North's military now has the final say on important issues because North Korean President Kim Il-Sung's son, Kim Jong-Il, has not yet officially succeeded his father, who died in July 1994.

"It has been more than one year since the death of Kim Il-Sung but no one has succeeded him. This means the military has taken power in North Korea," the president said.

He urged South Korea to be ready for a possible emergency on the Korean peninsula, saying that North Korea had deployed almost 100 warplanes at three front-line air bases, from where they could reach Seoul in five minutes.

"The North is starving and poor," the president said,

adding that the North's capital, Pyongyang, is not illuminated at night because of fuel shortages.

Alarmed by the North's unusual military buildup along the demilitarised zone (DMZ) which divides the two Koreas, Seoul has repeatedly warned that North Korea may launch an attack to avoid a crisis stemming from economic woes and serious food shortages.

Pyongyang, in turn, has accused Seoul of fabricating "provocations" by the North to divert public attention from a political crisis over a slush fund amassed by ex-President Roh Tae-Woo, who was indicted last week on graft charges.

The argument about a threat from North Korea is a graphic expression of its hostile policy toward (North Korea), the North's statement said.

The statement also urged Washington to stop military confrontation with the North, which it said was "sincerely" implementing its agreement concluded

with Washington last year.

The landmark agreement defused a crisis over the North's controversial nuclear programme and paved the way for normalisation talks between Washington and Pyongyang for the first time since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Meanwhile, a North Korean foreign exchange dealer defected to the South with his family Tuesday in the latest sign of trouble in the Communist-ruled country, which is reported to be on the brink of famine.

Choi Se-Ung, his wife and two children arrived at Seoul's Gimpo Airport from an unspecified European country.

"He said he decided to defect because he was disgusted with the North Korean system while working in a capitalist country," said a spokesman for Seoul's Agency for National Security.

Mr. Choi, 34, would be the first Pyongyang foreign exchange dealer to defect to Seoul.

S. Korea's Kim slams Roh, Chun as 'shameless'

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam bitterly attacked his two detained predecessors as "shameless" Tuesday and vowed to restore national pride.

But Mr. Kim's first public comments on the political scandals engulfing his country were immediately branded as a whitewash by the main opposition party, which demanded Mr. Kim apologise for his links to the disgraced ex-presidents.

Disappointed investors sold stock. They had expected greater clarity from Mr. Kim on a crisis that has put ex-presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo behind bars.

"Instead of coming forward to repent and beg forgiveness for their past wrongdoings, they further infuriated the people with shameless behaviour and remarks that are an affront to history," Mr. Kim said, referring to Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh.

"Setting history to rights

is a 'revolution of honour' to recover the nation's self-esteem and open a bright future for our nation," Mr. Kim said in the statement released by the presidential press office.

Meanwhile, state prosecutors probing a 1979 military coup that thrust then army Major-General Chun to power, visited the home of Choi Kyu-Hah, caretaker head of state at the time.

Mr. Chun faces mutiny charges stemming from the putsch.

Mr. Choi, 76, had snubbed a prosecution summons to appear for questioning, citing ill health.

He took over as president after the assassination of former President Park Chung-Hee.

It was not clear whether Mr. Choi was now cooperating with prosecutors.

Mr. Kim said the scandals were an enormous shock to South Koreans and had damaged the country's international reputation.

He vowed to "crush any

anti-historical and anti-democratic challenges" to his task of clearing up the past.

Mr. Kim's statement came on the 16th anniversary of the 1979 coup that led to an army massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in the city of Kwangju the following May, with an official death toll of about 200 people.

Mr. Chun threw down a challenge to Mr. Kim the day before his arrest on Dec. 3 by refusing to cooperate with prosecutors probing the putsch.

Mr. Roh will stand trial this month on charges of taking \$369 million in bribes from tycoons to top up a vast political slush fund which he confessed to amassing.

A spokesman for the opposition National Congress For New Politics attacked Mr. Kim for failing to address his own links to Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh.

"This is only aimed at covering up his misdeeds," a

spokesman said.

In 1990, Mr. Kim merged his opposition party with the ruling camp led by Mr. Roh and became its successful candidate in the 1992 presidential elections.

Mr. Kim should "repent and apologise," the spokesman said.

Securities brokers said investors were disappointed by Mr. Kim's statement, which they found to be vaguely worded.

"The market was hoping something good would come from Mr. Kim's speech, but it was disappointing because there was no clear statement of his relationship with the slush fund scandal," said Robert Song of Ssangyong Securities.

Mr. Kim has been accused by opposition parties of dipping into Mr. Roh's slush funds. He has denied taking "a single cent."

The Seoul Stock Exchange index of shares closed 4.53 points lower at 943.22 in trading.

Sri Lanka refugees caught in rebel-army tug of war

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Hundreds of thousands of desperate Tamil civilians who fled savage fighting in the Jaffna peninsula have now become caught in a tug of war between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Both sides say refugee resettlement is top priority. But the government, fresh from its victory in the peninsula, wants them to go home. The Tigers want them to resettle in areas which are still rebel-controlled.

Lawrence Thilakar, spokesman for the Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), said more than 200,000 Jaffna Tamils had fled fighting in the northern Jaffna peninsula where the armed forces captured the rebel stronghold of Jaffna town last week.

"Our priority is resettlement," Mr. Thilakar told Reuters Monday night from his Paris base when asked what plans the LTTE had hatched to counter the continuing armed forces offensive.

The government, eager to win hearts and minds, wants families to return to their Jaffna homes where a major rebuilding operation is under way. Masons, carpenters, cement and roofing tiles are being shipped to the north.

When fighting intensified in the peninsula in the last few months, the refugees fled the only way they could — across a lagoon to a Tiger-controlled area known as the Vanni in the north of the mainland.

The LTTE, in a statement faxed from London Tuesday, said more than

4,000 people were crossing to the Vanni each day and that LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran had ordered a "speedy relief package" with free transport to any point in the Vanni. More doctors and jobs would be provided.

It said new towns and villages were springing "almost overnight".

But relief workers expressed fears Tuesday about worsening conditions in the camps at rebel-controlled Kilinochchi and elsewhere on the mainland.

"There are more and more people in Kilinochchi. The place cannot hold so many people," one said.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga assured Colombo-based Tamil leaders Monday the government was doing all it could to alleviate suffering in the rebel-controlled camps, sending in regular shipments of food, and explained the rebuilding operation in Jaffna town.

But Mr. Thilakar said the refugees would not return to Jaffna from camps south of the lagoon and "live under occupation".

"The LTTE is supplying free boats, bus transport and medical supplies. We have given them land to cultivate and land to make cottages. Already various institutions have been established and we hope to set up business areas."

He alleged government forces were trying to starve the people into returning home. "It would be like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire," he said.

"The people are not in a position to go back under military occupation because

they have seen what happened in Batticaloa after the STF attack. More than 30 civilians were killed."

Special Task Force (STF) police commandos backed by army and air force ground troops attacked several rebel jungle bases in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts over the weekend.

The military gave no casualty figures but says it takes all precautions to avoid civilian casualties, an assertion backed by Western relief agencies working in the field.

Mr. Thilakar said last week the LTTE was concentrating on attacking military positions in the north and east, their would-be homeland in this tiny tropical island.

On Monday he did not mention military operations and said he did not know if there were any plans for a Christmas truce.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka's minority Tamil politicians Tuesday expressed dismay at President Kumaratunga's decision to press ahead with the military offensive against Tamil Tiger rebels in the country's north.

"We are unhappy with the decision she has taken, because a resumption of a military operation would mean high civilian casualties," said Murugesu Sivasithamparam, the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

Any new offensive launched by the military would inevitably be in densely populated areas, he added.

Mrs. Kumaratunga told Tamil leaders here Monday that they should apply pressure on the LTTE to agree to

a truce and that the government was not willing to initiate any deal with the Tigers.

Tamil politicians who attended a meeting with Mrs. Kumaratunga Monday said she wanted them to encourage the LTTE to lay down arms and turn up for talks. The government, she said, had "done the maximum" it could to bring peace.

"What can we do? We can only appeal," said Mr. Sivasithamparam. "We (the TULF) certainly have no leverage with the LTTE." Mr. Sivasithamparam's predecessor, Appapillai Amirthalingam, was assassinated by LTTE gunmen in 1989.

Monday's meeting was Mrs. Kumaratunga's first with Tamil parties since the army captured the northern town of Jaffna from the Tigers 10 days ago. Jaffna had been the capital of a de facto state run by the LTTE since 1990.

The president has indicated that military operations will continue and the next priority would be to open a land route to Jaffna peninsula through territory currently held by the Tamil separatists.

Tamil sources said Mrs. Kumaratunga promised she would present her peace package to a parliamentary select committee soon and expected Tamil legislators to encourage the Tigers to negotiate with the government.

"I expect others to take half the risks that I take," Mrs. Kumaratunga was quoted as saying by a Tamil politician who was at Monday's meeting.

Hosokawa declares support for Hata in party race

TOKYO (AFP) — Former Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa declared his support Tuesday for fellow former Premier Tsutomu Hata in a leadership election for the opposition New Frontier Party later this month.

The announcement came only a day after backroom party boss Ichiro Ozawa said he too would run in the election following a decision by incumbent leader Toshiki Kaifu, yet another former prime minister, to bow out of the race.

"Hosokawa declared his support for Mr. Hata after considering the policies of the two candidates," a political aide said.

The New Frontier Party, the second biggest party in the Japanese parliament, was set up a year ago through the merger of several parties and groups, notably the Japan Renewal Party formed by Mr. Hata, Mr. Ozawa and dozens of other lawmakers who defected from the dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1993.

Other members of the party are from the Buddhist-backed Komeito, the populist New Japan Party which used to be led by Mr. Hosokawa and the Democratic Socialist Party, which split from the left-wing Socialist Party 35 years ago.

Campaigning for the election starts this weekend. Voting is scheduled to end on Dec. 26 with the results being announced two days later.

Mr. Ozawa, the political strategist behind two LDP cabinets headed by Mr. Kaifu from 1989 as well as two non-LDP coalition governments formed by Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Hata in 1993 and 1994, reportedly has the support of most lawmakers from the party.

U.S. ambassador blasts Burma during U.N. human rights action

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations blasted the Burmese government Monday as a U.N. committee passed a resolution deploring the human rights situation in that country for the fourth year in a row.

The third committee, which approves human rights measures before they go to the General Assembly, adopted it by consensus.

The Burmese ambassador strongly protested the language of the resolution, but did not vote against it.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, said Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was operating outside of the law and internationally recognised standards of human rights.

She warned that "the SLORC should have no doubt that it will be held responsible for any actions that result in physical harm or unjust punishment against those who have simply engaged in the peaceful exercise of internationally recognised rights."

Human Rights Watch/Asia issued a statement welcoming the resolution but criticising the General Assembly for failing "to recommend or commit member states to adopt any particular actions to press for implementation of the resolution."

The human rights organi-

sation said no countries should give incentives to trade with or give loans to Burma until it improves its record, and called for a U.N. on-the-ground monitoring of the country "as tensions are expected to increase over the coming weeks and months."

Ms. Albright gave as an example of continued repression the National Convention to draft a new constitution, which was held in November in Rangoon without the participation of the opposition National League For Democracy (NLD) party.

The NLD won the 1990 elections in Burma but has not been allowed to take power. NLD delegates, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, at first boycotted convention meetings and then were expelled.

"Following the release from detention last July of Aung San Suu Kyi, there were hopes that the National Convention would, in fact, become a meaningful forum for discussion about Burma's future," Ms. Albright said.

"Instead, the government has maintained its habit of rigid control, and the few representatives of the democratic movement and of the various ethnic groups have been prohibited from voicing dissenting views," she said.

The resolution mentions the convention, and urges

the government to "take all appropriate measures to allow all citizens to participate freely in the political process," and to take immediate steps for democracy.

Burmese Ambassador Win Mra said the resolution sponsored by Sweden, while more tame than the one passed last year, "does not accurately reflect the prevailing situation" in Burma and "will not serve any useful purpose."

"My delegation rejects all the negative elements in the draft before us," he said.

"These references clearly aim to portray the government of Myanmar (Burma) as systematically engaged in human rights violations. It has never been the policy of the government to condone violations of human rights."

He said the U.N. special rapporteur Yozo Yokota, who prepared the report on which the resolution was based, showed "a lack of balance and professionalism," and he asked for the measure to be thrown out.

The Burmese ambassador said any criticism of his government's handling of the convention was unfounded, because the NLD's non-participation "was the result of a premeditated action of one political party to mar the successes achieved so far" by the SLORC.

Kashmir hostages seen in local garb

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Four Western tourists held hostage by separatist guerrillas in Kashmir since July were spotted last week near Srinagar wearing local clothing, police said Tuesday.

The hostages were last sighted on Dec. 7 wearing Firans (Kashmiri robes) in Akingam village. They were seen guarded by the militants," a senior police official told Reuters in Srinagar, summer capital of India's Jammu and Kashmir state.

"Authorities have mobilised their local sources in southern Kashmir to know the whereabouts of the hostages," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

The official said the four tourists and their captors had periodically been sighted in different villages in southern Kashmir. Akingam is located in Anantnag district, about 52 kilometres south of Srinagar.

Officials said they hoped that Al-Faran

militants holding American Donald Hutchings, German Dirk Hasert and Britons Paul Mangan and Keith Wells would re-establish contact after breaking communication more than two weeks ago.

"For the last 16 days there has been no contact, but we have not given up hope. We are still expecting that Al-Faran will talk to us and end the crisis," a state government official said.

Al-Faran has repeatedly broken off talks with Indian officials after negotiations have derailed, and several times has issued death threats.

The tourists were picked up while on trekking holidays in the Himalayan region, riven by a bloody five-year-old separatist rebellion against Indian rule in which doctors and police say more than 20,000 people have died.

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Exploring depth of settlement

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton's decision to dispatch Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Syria and Israel in the next several days suggests that his talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Washington have been fruitful enough to bring fresh optimism to the Syrian track. Several obstacles have stood in the way of successful Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations till now. The talks between the two sides broke down in June specifically over security arrangements that Israeli military strategists have long insisted on as a precondition for the withdrawal of Israeli army from the occupied Golan Heights.

Now it seems that new thoughts on the issue of mutual security arrangements have been brought forward by Mr. Peres to justify the resumption of a new round of talks. What also could be encouraging in the wake of the Israeli prime minister's talks with the U.S. president, and the ensuing telephone exchange between Mr. Clinton and his Syrian counterpart President Hafez Al Assad, is the apparent agreement to explore concurrently the multi-faceted negotiations between Syria and Israel, including withdrawal, normalisation, sharing of water and security arrangements. Dealing with the various aspects of the Syrian-Israeli track simultaneously offers the right opportunity to evade putting the cart before the horse for both parties when it comes to the search for an equitable and lasting settlement.

Mr. Peres has already indicated that the Israeli people know well the extent of the compromise that they have to make in return for making peace with Syria. There is little doubt that what the Israeli prime minister had in mind is a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for normal and meaningful relations between the two countries. With Mr. Peres enjoying an unprecedented high popularity among Israelis, he is well poised to deliver on his vision for regional stability and prosperity so that the full circle of peace in the Middle East would become attainable, hopefully in the next few months.

The Israelis are right to think that a settlement with Syria will automatically open the way for a broad peace involving the Gulf and the Arab North African states (excluding perhaps Libya), a development which should represent the "final chapter of the Arab-Israeli conflict," as Mr. Peres would put it. In order to achieve such goal, the Israelis should also know that there is a price tag and they should be prepared to pay it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday criticised Iran for its contradictory positions towards relations with the Arab countries. While during the Yemeni civil war, Tehran was repeatedly heard calling for the preservation of the country's unity and accusing the Gulf states of trying to divide that country, it has continued to occupy the Arab islands in the Gulf, declaring emphatically that these islands belong to Iran, said Hosni Ayyesh. While claiming that it is keen on preserving Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, Tehran has been broadcasting reports about the activities of the Iran-backed groups in Iraq which are trying to topple the regime in Baghdad, thus paving the ground for a civil strife in Iraq, which would eventually help Iran achieve its objectives in that country, continued the writer. Saying that Tehran has never ceased to claim its support for the struggle against Zionism, never stopped claiming that it was supporting the Lebanese resistance and reaffirming that it will never change its position vis-a-vis Israel and that any peace treaty with Israel is totally rejected, the writer said the Iranian president has repeatedly announced his country will not place obstacles in the path of peace with Israel, and that Iran will not sever relations with Arab states that normalise relations with the Jewish state.

IT IS clear that the draft amendments to the Press and Publications Law that are circulating among journalists are rejected by the journalists and the Jordan Press Association, because they seem to be totally conflicting with the present law and because they impose strict rules that limit freedom of the press and expression, said Mohammad Subeithi in Al Dunthur. The writer said that the best way to deal with the excesses and violations that might occur, especially in the weeklies, is to set up a special independent committee of experts in journalism to come up with strict regulations and controls to prevent any excesses. This idea, which was originally the brain child of His Majesty King Hussein during a meeting with the press recently, would help the Ministry of Information avoid any confrontations with the press and help enforce the present Press and Publications Law, continued the writer.

Washington Watch

The legislative battles of '95 and the issues battles of '96

By Dr. James Zogby

THE END of the cold war has brought about worldwide political dislocation. No country, not even the U.S., is immune. For decades there was one constant in American politics: intense competition with the Soviet Union defined a bipartisan U.S. foreign policy. During that time the fear of communist infiltration also played an important role in shaping attitudes on many domestic political issues as well.

From the 1920s through the 1960s, opponents of organised labour, of the civil rights movement of African-Americans, of the anti-nuclear and pro-environmental movements, attempted to thwart these movements by defining them as "communist" or anti-American movements. It might have been imagined that, with the demise of what President Ronald Reagan dubbed "the evil empire," there would be a period of political calm.

The opposite appears to be true, however. The disorientation resulting from the end of the cold war and the passing of the familiar nightmare of the "communist world" has brought about a new and in some ways more troubling source of fears.

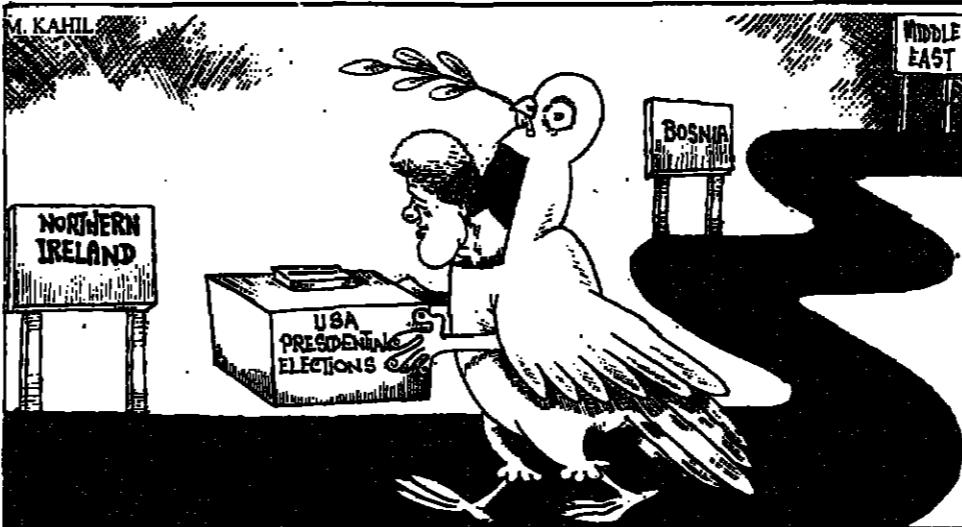
Americans have turned inward. While not fully articulated into a coherent ideology, there is abundant evidence in American political discourse of an un-directed anger. This anger, coupled with a deep sense of alienation characterises many of the conservative spokespeople on the right wing of the American politics.

The end of the cold war is, of course, only one source of this disorientation. Other sources stem from the dramatic changes in U.S. society brought on by economic factors. Throughout the U.S., many communities are beginning to realise the full impact of the tremendous economic dislocation of the past three decades.

The entire Northeast and Midwest have been dramatically affected by the loss of industry. As unions became powerful, factories which dominated the labour market in that region closed down and moved first to Southern states where there were no unions, and then abroad to Mexico and Asia where wages are even lower.

In their wake the departed industries left unemployment, cities with declining economic bases unable to pay for necessary services, declining population and young people forced to find employment outside their home region, and with that the breakup of neighbourhoods and families.

My home town is a case in point. As late as 1960 Utica, New York, was an



industrial-based city of 100,000 people. Today the industry is gone and the population has dwindled to 60,000. With most of its educated young residents having left to find employment elsewhere, the city today is a shadow of its former self.

Neighbourhoods that were once middle class ethnic communities are now poverty-stricken and dotted with abandoned homes. Wage earners have been replaced as the dominant social group in many neighbourhoods by elderly living on social security payments, the disabled and poor living in government-subsidised housing projects. And the breakup of neighbourhoods and families has brought a revolution in the social mores of the whole area.

Across the U.S. this story repeats itself. Even the middle class has been riven with economic stress.

It is no wonder that new political currents have emerged in U.S. politics. A confused and distressed public seeking clarity has, in recent years, fallen prey to a number of candidates, movements and political leaders who have fed off the public anger and acted to deepen it.

There were the presidential campaigns of Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot in 1992. Both were populists and angry campaigners who were both "anti-government" and "isolationist." The trends reflected and fostered by their efforts have recently spurred a number of national radio and television "talk shows." Hosted by right-wing personalities, these programmes have become extremely popular and reach an estimated audience of 11 million.

Even a casual listener can read the mood of these programmes. They are, for the most part, entertaining — the hosts are skilled at transforming anger into irreverent, iconoclastic humour. Anger at the president, at Congress and the government in general, anger at things and groups "foreign" to America, and anger at the loss of the old "certainties" — all drive the currents of right wing political discourse.

Today these ideas, namely isolationism (fear of foreign involvement) and nativism (fear of foreigners), have moved from the far fringe of American politics, where they were in 1992, to the centre of the national political debate. And they have spawned the difficult legislative battles that confront Arab-Americans and others concerned with the future of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

Over the next few weeks, Arab-Americans will be engaged in an effort to build support for U.S. peacekeeping in Bosnia, maintain support for U.S. assistance to the Palestinian people, oppose efforts to restrict immigration and deny government benefits to legal immigrants and oppose legislation that will deny civil liberties in the name of countering terrorism.

In each case we will have to confront the angry currents of nativism and isolationism.

Support for Bosnia peacekeeping

Even with Republican support from Senator Dole and former presidents George Bush and Gerald Ford for President Bill Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops as a part of the NATO force in Bosnia, most members of Congress are reporting that calls to their offices are running 100 to 1 against the move.

With the radio talk show hosts and Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Perot beating the isolationist drums against the president, it will be a tough, uphill battle to secure congressional support for the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. The president has the authority to send the troops, and he will do it. But absent congressional and public support, it may be difficult to sustain the mission.

The White House is fighting back hard, as is the strong coalition we have built with the cooperation with other ethnic, religious and humanitarian groups.

Aid to the Palestinians

The right wing has refused to allow some old demons to die, and has cre-

ated new ones to replace those it lost with the demise of the Soviet Union. For some Senators like Jesse Helms and Alfonse D'Amato, the Palestine Liberation Organisation remains "terrorist" and evil, and Islamic groups have replaced communist groups as the number one perceived threat to the West.

While the State Department has not wavered from firm support for the Palestinians and has exercised care in its definition of Islam and Islamic groups in the Middle East, the right wing commentators and politicians have found these to be attractive issues with which to create public fear and anger. And so, what ought to be an easy issue of \$75 million to support economic development in support of the Middle East peace process, has become a huge battle with the administration forced to cede more and more ground to the Congress in order to get the money approved.

As it currently stands, the small amount of aid given to the Palestinians is the most encumbered and controlled of all the aid packages given by the U.S.

Anti-immigrant legislation

While some right-wingers such as Pat Buchanan have called for ending all immigration to the U.S., the final compromise reached by the proponents of immigration reform in Congress calls for cutting immigration by 30 per cent. The bill currently under consideration in Congress will make it virtually impossible for citizens to bring family members to the U.S. as new immigrants and it will deny social services to immigrants who are not yet citizens. One provision that passed the Senate, but not the House, even proposed to eliminate social benefits to immigrants who become citizens.

A strong coalition has mobilised to oppose this legislation but, given the mood of the Republican-led Congress, the bills will most probably pass. After strong lobbying, the administration has gone on record promising to veto bills con-

taining provisions that will deny benefits to naturalised citizens and some immigrants.

The anti-terrorism bill

After lying dormant for many months, the effort to pass anti-terrorism legislation has resumed. Despite some compromises, the bill being considered by Congress still contains many provisions that are threatening to the civil and political rights of some U.S. groups, especially Arab-Americans and American-Muslims.

Given the intensity with which proponents are pushing this legislation, one might conclude that terrorism had reached epidemic proportions in the U.S. In fact, the opposite is true. From an average of twenty or so terrorist acts per year in the early 1980s, the number has dropped to a mere three or four incidents in recent years.

And of the 180 or so domestic terrorist acts reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the past 15 years, only three were carried out by Arab or Muslim groups. And, as experts have testified, nothing in the current legislation could have stopped any of those evil acts from occurring.

Nevertheless, fear is an effective mobilising force and the air of panic generated by the World Trade Centre and Oklahoma City bombings continue to influence the debate in support of the anti-terrorism bill.

A new coalition opposing the bill was announced last week. It is an unusual grouping in that it spans the political spectrum from the American Civil Liberties Union to the National Rifle Association. Arab-Americans and Irish-Americans are also included in the coalition. The common thread uniting most of these groups is concern that they will be primary victims of the aspects of the bill which violate current standards of civil and political rights.

The legislation will be voted on next week.

These legislative battles of 1995 foreshadow the issues that will dominate the political debate in 1996. The forces that derive their impetus from fear and isolationism and nativism will continue to be strong factors in the political discourse. Arab-Americans and their allies will have their agenda defined for them in large measure by opposition to these groups.

No longer a single-issue constituency, Arab-Americans will, like other Americans in the post-cold war world, engage in the broad and far-reaching debate over the future direction of America and the values that will shape its foreign and domestic policies.

A recipe for further instability

By G.H. Jansen

"HYPOCRISY IS the homage that vice pays to virtue," according to the great aphorist Duc de Rochefoucauld, if that is true, then a falsified election is the tactic used by a dictatorship to simulate democracy. That would certainly seem to be the case with the two-stage parliamentary elections recently held in Egypt, as is the case in many another fraudulent elections referendum held in a variety of non-democratic countries.

This farce of obtaining popular support for a person who, or a system which, is really indifferent to popular opinion is a curious anomaly. For why should a dictator or a one-party system want to get a 95 or 98 per cent vote of approval, when they know that the vote is worthless because the result has been arranged beforehand?

Can it be that even the most hardened and cynical totalitarian really believes that "vox populi, vox Dei," that the voice of the people is the voice of God?

A few years ago the whole of the non-Communist world used to mock and make fun of the 98-99 per cent vote held in Communist countries. Yet nowadays, some of those same democratic countries are accepting and approving falsified elections, provided that those elections are arranged in countries with regimes that are friendly towards the democracies, while falsified elections or referenda are scorned and dismissed if they are arranged by regimes unfriendly towards the democracies.

In other words, there are no absolute standards and values by which democratic practice is judged, but only tactical adjustments depending on relative and temporary relationships.

Thus, the referendum to approve President Saddam Hussein in Iraq was written off by the West as absurd and valueless — because President Saddam is anti-West and the West is anti-Iraq — while the equally valueless election in Egypt is given at least some value and is not dismissed out of

hand, as it should be, merely because President Hosni Mubarak is pro-Western.

Given the benefit of the doubt to non-democratic and anti-democratic regimes and behaviour simply because they are "friendly" is in the long-run of the democratic perspective eventually counter-productive. For it is the duty of democrats to speak out against non-democratic behaviour.

The quality of elections is crucial when it comes to evaluating the democratic validity of any regime produced by the elections. For while the Bard of Avon said that "a rose by any other name will smell as sweet," more discrimination has to come into play when evaluating what are supposedly democratic elections. A "democratic" system that is not based on truly free and fair elections is democratic.

For example, Egypt announced officially that 317 seats, out of the 444 seats in parliament, were won by the official National Democratic Party (NDP), while 127 seats were won by "independent" or opposi-

tion candidates, which would seem to prove that the elections were at least tolerably free and fair. But when the quality of the "independents" is more carefully scrutinised, it becomes clear that most of these "independents" are in fact NDP members who claimed to be independent, because they wanted to be given credit for not being government appointees. And thus no less than 99 of those who were elected as "independents" immediately reverted to being NDP members after the election.

Therefore, these Egyptian elections were not a free and fair popular consultation and the resultant regime of President Mubarak is not truly democratic.

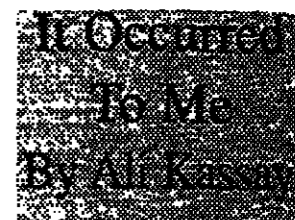
Hence the question: Who did the authorities in Egypt think they were deceiving when they rigged the elections using "independent" candidates?

If the Egyptian electorate and the friends of Egypt abroad accept without protest a falsified election, it is because over the years and after many falsified elec-

tions, the electorate and these friends have come to accept that nothing better can be expected and that protest or denunciation would produce no change or improve ment.

But the price that has to be paid is that politicised and sophisticated Egyptians and their democratic friends outside Egypt will take it for granted that the Egyptian regime does not really represent the popular will in Egypt, that it has no legitimacy, and so may be opposed and, perhaps, overthrown violently by non-democratic means.

If a state does not respect the norms of democratic behaviour, one cannot expect its opponents to do so and politics then becomes a free-for-all with no holds barred, which no government can willingly accept.



Too few queue

NOT MANY years ago, a study on Jordan identified the educational system, which emphasises learning by heart, and discourages conceptual and analytical thinking; i.e. thinking altogether, as one of the main handicaps against the country's progress. While this may have been correct then, and in the full certainty that measures have already been taken to correct the situation, I venture to propose another step that would contribute immeasurably to the advancement of our society, not only in the field of education, but in other walks of life as well. I propose that our teachers should double their already diligent and indefatigable efforts to introduce into the minds of our young, a concept which, for centuries, appears to have eluded our society and remained an unfathomable mystery: The straight line.

Observe, if you will, what happens every day at banks, post offices or government offices, when a Jordanian arrives to transact some business, and finds another ahead of him. The newcomer stations himself anywhere except behind the first. Normally he stands on the first man's right, rests his chin on his shoulder and permits himself to look on at the business underway, guided by the burning desire to probe and seek knowledge that makes for great scientific advancement.

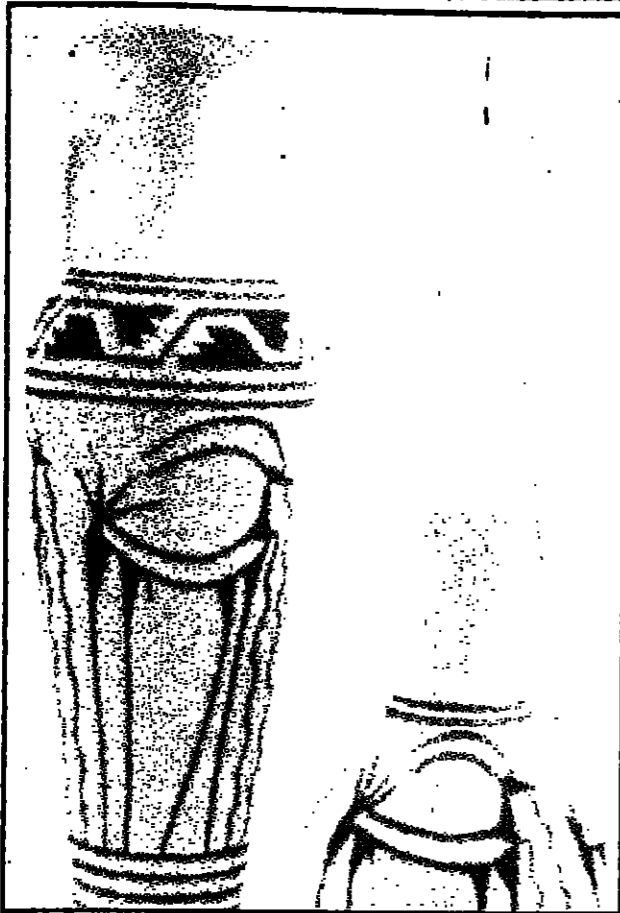
The third person to arrive is invariably a student of geometry, for he takes up a position on the left hand of the first, forming an almost equilateral triangle, and, spurred like the second man by the quest for discovery and his concern for his fellow man, he indulges himself equally in a deep study of the affairs of the first person.

As the line grows, fascinating interactions occur which, for the student of human behaviour, offer the prospect of an interesting study of survival strategy and tactics in situations that are hopeless but not serious. Every now and again somebody shouts for order and for a straight line to be formed. The uninitiated shuffle shyly into a similitude of a queue, whereupon the speaker avails himself of the commotion to manoeuvre himself nearer the front. Some wily veterans, though, are wise to the stratagem, and they dive swiftly to block the speaker and move ahead of him.

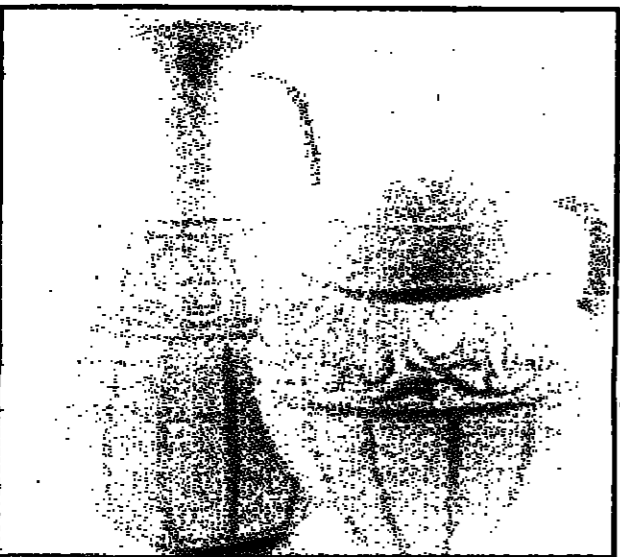
Women, always past-masters of human psychology, surpass themselves on these occasions. They arrive complaining demurely that their conservatism and correctness prevent them from standing amidst men, and beg permission to stand against the wall at the front of the queue. Once there, timidity is flung to the four winds, as they elbow the nearest two men in the ribs and dive at the receptionist to complete their business and depart skipping with a hey-ho and a hey-nony-no dancing on their lips.

As the day progresses, an infinite variety of geometrical shapes are formed and dissolved — a kaleidoscope of humanity. Squares are too regular to expect; but quadrangles of all species of irregularity, pentagons, octagons, and even the occasional semblance of a circle. Upon reflection, maybe we should forget the straight line and market the study of the Jordanian queue as a new method of learning geometry.

On the gift road for handicrafts



A selection of Bawadi rugs from Queen Alia Fund (right); bronze age amphora and juglet with pre-dynastic animals from Silsal (top); juglet with handle decorated with split leaf arabesque and narrow based jar with inscriptions bearing wishes of prosperity to the owner, also from Silsal



HOLIDAY SHOPPING—it's never easy, especially for finicky shoppers who demand nothing less than a unique gift or who long for a haven of holiday spirit. But a trip around town to Amman's plethora of craft shops should settle one's holiday hankering.

To facilitate you, we've even come up with an efficient shopping route! Just beyond the First Circle, down Rainbow Street find **Jordan River Designs**. This beautiful little dwelling is a best-kept secret for gifts for the home. Their usual collection includes plush bedspreads and duvets and splashy throw pillows, designed by some of Jordan's best designers, all handsewn.

Other home accessories include lampshades, bath towels, framed mirrors, picture frames, traditionally embroidered with modern flair.

Especially for the holiday season, Jordan River Design designers have created a handful of fun holiday dinner table accessories—tablecloths, napkins and napkin rings, as well as handtowels stitched in holiday colours.

Attend a holiday dinner bearing gifts—a tasteful holiday basket from Jordan River Designs should do the trick—stuffed with holiday favourites—wine and cheese—and a few extras such as a pair of wine glasses in holiday colours.

Jordan River Designs will deck the halls for a Christmas Open House Dec. 15-17 and 22-24, with special extended shopping hours (from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.) on these days.

Continue your holiday revelling next door at the Bani Hamida House, an establishment that hardly needs an introduction.

Bani Hamida commenced its holiday happenings Dec. 10 and will carry on til

Jan. 2 selling their distinguished wares—durable and exquisite rugs, cushions and wall-hangings—in seasonal colours and new designs.

On to the Second Circle, just behind the Lebanese Embassy, rests the cozy house of hands, **Al Aydi**. The shop has a handful of holiday wares—Hebron glass in seasonal colours with Christmas motifs painted in gold.

Keepsake boxes covered in Damascene jewel-toned 'sayeh' are a tasteful way to present a small gift, such as jewellery—also available at Al Aydi, and make great stocking stuffers.

Decorate a holiday dinner with a new take on Jerusalem pottery: these special ceramic pieces replace traditional blue with rich green as the dominant colour. This dinnerware is truly Jordanian, hand thrown in Salt.

Al Aydi is also a good stop for those shopping for collectors. The shop also has an extensive collection

of antique rugs, with a staff knowledgeable about the history and origin of each piece, as well as several interesting handwoven baskets and a collection of embroidered goods from both Jordan and Palestine, old and new.

Also find at Al Aydi a few pieces from Ammar Khamash and Silsal's holiday collection (see below).

Out Al Aydi's front gate, left towards the InterContinental Hotel, see a sign directing you to Bourgan, tucked away at the end of a small cul de sac.

Looking for anything with holiday motif? Find it here. Bourgan is the holidays. Hand embroidered holiday pajamas and slippers for a long winter's nap, for adults kids or babies. Neatly embroidered hand and bath towels trimmed in sayeh. Christmas stockings with plenty of room available to stuff them—a hand-sewn teddy bear in sayeh, for example. Holiday wine sacks. Christmas ornaments for the tree.

Bourgan also has a plethora of nick-nacks for the home such as quilted tea cozies and coasters in Islamic motifs. Be careful. You could get stuck here.

On to Jabal Weibdeh. On the main street leading to Duwar Hawoos, just opposite the French Cultural Centre and the Cairo-Amman Bank, find the **Green Branch**. This little shop is the embroidery authority. Small but well-stocked, the Green Branch offers embroidered goods from Jordan and Palestine: traditional dresses, cushion covers in all sizes, jackets and vests. Design and

colours vary from traditional to modern. The Green Branch will custom design and cut upon request for hard-to-fit sizes and hard-to-please people.

Between the Fourth and the Fifth Circle take a left after Ideal Systems (look for the MacIntosh Apple). One hundred metres on the right, find **Silsal**. Jordan's house of pottery where sisters Rula Atallah and Reem Habbayeb have been reviving the art.

Stoneware pieces—including vases, place settings, napkin rings, candle holders, coffee sets and bowls—based on Islamic

art are a comfortable addition to any home and are a tasteful gift. Most pieces are in earth tones. All are non-toxic, dishwasher and microwave safe.

Each holiday season Silsal designs a special line of seasonal pretties, available for a limited time and never to be created again.

This year, Silsal's simple holiday pattern displays olive branches in muted green, interspersed with red

berries on stone-grey background. Also, red clay candle holders are a nice accent in hallways or on dinner tables. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes with red candles made to fit.

Also, Silsal will gift wrap any purchase in environmentally friendly and recycled brown wrap, bound in red ribbon and strands of wheat.

The Queen Alia Fund For Social Development

(QAF) is also indulging in holiday fun with their "Season of Joy" exhibition, which ends Dec. 12.

Visit the **National Ceramics Centre** on the Hussein Medical Centre Street, across from the Khalda Gas Station.

On show are QAF's varied collection of Bawadi rugs and wallhangings, bank tablecloths and napkins, exquisite Petra Pottery and other ceramic goods.

What's On at Fuheis Al Ruwaq

JOIN THE new neighbourhood atmosphere with a "Night of Christmas on Stage" from the students of the Baptist School at the old Orthodox Church in Al Ruwaq at 4.00 p.m.

From Dec. 17 through 22, there will be a bazaar at the Greek Orthodox Church and on Dec. 19, the Noor Al Hussein Junior Band will perform festive music also at the old Orthodox Church at 4.00 p.m.

Finally, on Dec. 22 there will be Christmas carolling all afternoon, from the YMCA choir members and the Young People of the Catholic Church in various parts of the Fuheis and Ruwaq neighbourhood.

Christmas Children's Books Christmas Choice

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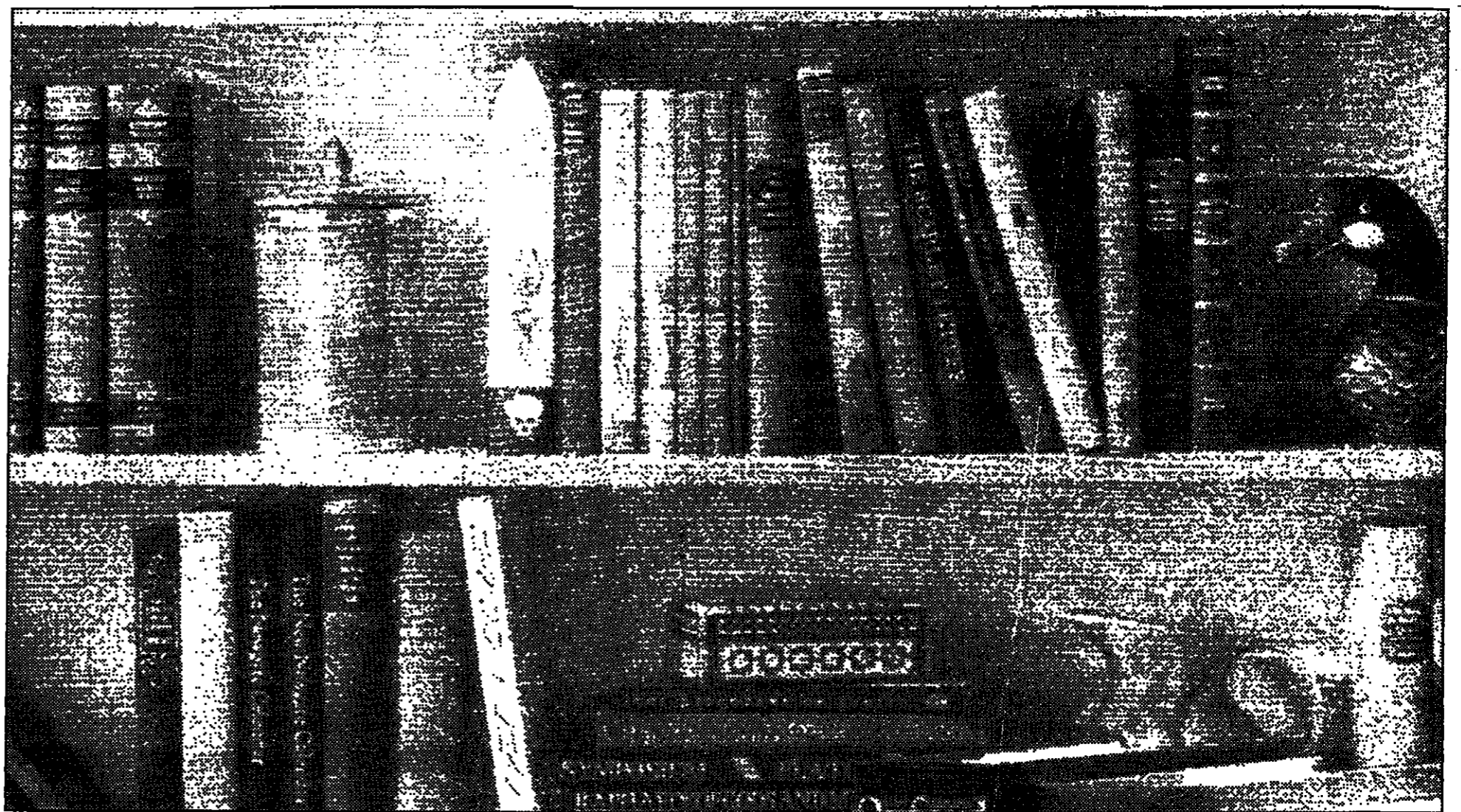
مفاجأة عيد الميلاد المجيد في

ابتداء من ٩٥/١٢/٥ ولغاية ٩٥/١٢/٣١

خصم على جميع الألعاب والهدايا

Wednesday, December 13 1995

Heavenly havens Amman sprouts out with books for all tastes



HEAVEN, TO some, is a good bookshop and all the time in the world to read. And right here in Amman you can find a piece of that heaven, if you've at least got the time to read on here. When it comes to books as gifts, you can hardly go wrong. Most people have interests, and it is all a matter of choosing the right subject for the person in mind. The problem is where to find the right book.

Although bookshops are definitely not sprouting out with the speed of fast food establishments, there are a few good places in Amman where you can buy recent and varied publications. The Jordan Times visited four such bookshops: Philadelphia Bookshop, which is the newest, Sharbain and Amman bookshops and Jordan Book Centre.

And with the holiday season just around the corner, here's a sample of what you can find:

To start with, the widest selection of books for the knowledge-hungry can be found at Philadelphia, in

Gardens St. Here is an intellectual's haven. In addition to the store's range of books, there is a library-style corner, a roundtable of international press and top of the list political and literary magazines to browse through. But that is all by the way. Now for gift ideas.

Know someone who has a basic interest for high-level arguments but is too afraid to reveal his/her naivete?

Well, here's a handy gift: Philosophy, mythology, politics, history, cultural and women's studies galore at the Philadelphia Bookshop.

From Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, a book that has been around for nearly 2,000 years, and is now a best seller, to a recent re-writing of history, neatly entitled *Armageddon*, by Clive Ponting.

Then there are those who everyone pretends to understand: philosophy from Jung (*Man and His Symbols*); Men, Dreams and Reflections) to Wittgenstein, Russell, Popper, Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the long outdated Freud.

But to get away from these men and their imposing symbols, there is a refreshingly large and up-to-date selection of women's literature and women's studies. Books by women, about women and for all.

And yes, within those you will find the perfect gift: the trilogy of novels translated from Arabic to English by three Arab women authors. The set is edited from the U.K. by Fadia Faqir. Beautiful writing contained within non-traditional themes and postmodern approaches to style.

A sample of other names you may find on the women's studies shelf: academic gender studies by Leila Ahmed; anthropology (*Veiled Sentiments*) by Lila Abu Lughod; and "her-story" of the Two Queens of Baghdad by Nabia Abbott in the new and still highly relevant edition.

The cultural studies section holds books of interest such as film-making, multimedia, postmodernism and modern ideology: ideology and modern culture: while the politics and history sec-

tions are not confined to what the Europeans write about the Arabs, but extend shelf space to Arab historians and political writers, both recent and ancient.



In a lighter mood? Friends or family wishing they had time to learn a language? Philadelphia Bookshop and Jordan Book Centre stock "teach yourself a language" kits (German, Spanish, French, Italian and Hebrew) complete with audio-tapes. At Sharbain the emphasis is on course books in German, French and English.

For those who already know a foreign language, French in particular, a great gift would be a French clas-

sical text from the shelves of the French books section at the Philadelphia book-store.

Art books of every hue and medium for the art

The Phaidon Art Series covering Goya, Picasso, Manet, Rembrandt, Cezanne, Modigliani, Van Gogh and others.

When it comes to art, though, Philadelphia Bookshop remembers that it is during childhood that minds are best cultivated. The children's section, therefore, has books detailing artists' lives and works (painting, music, and literature), complete with attractive graphics, as well as a wide range of children's literature from infancy to the teens.

If you know a parent who constantly complains about having to read to the children at bed-time (when she'd rather be watching T.V.), here's a good gift solution for the kids: Jordan Book Centre stocks book/cassette story-telling packs, with many titles to choose from.

And while you're there, why not give that same parent the gift: **Who's Fit to Be A Parent?**

Then there is row after row of the "Sweet Valley Twins" books at Philadelphia Bookshop, making great gifts for those problematic teens.

Know someone who is a garden or nature lover, a creative herbalist, a vegetable grower? Books on these topics make fine gifts, and they can be found at all four stores.

For those with particular hobbies, namely carpet-weaving, rug-buying, jewellery selection, and pottery, Sharbain has illustrated books with titles such as **Chinese Rugs—a buyer's guide**, (for your jet-setting friend), **Tribal Rugs** (mother should know what she's stepping on), **Kilims—the Complete Guide**, (maybe it's about time you discovered what a Kilim is) **Rings**, (definitely not about wheat field extraterrestrial markings) **Rough Diamonds** and **Creative Pottery**.

Sharbain's other speciality is food. Now, you must know someone who loves to cook, or eat, or philosophise on food, or all three. Yes, you can cook up a whole philosophy on food because Sharbain has the most amazing encyclopaedic-sized book entitled (simply): **The History of Food**.

This tempting tome tells you all about food symbolism, the mythology of food, its history and how it came to be that we eat certain things. "Coffee and Politics," for example, takes up a whole chapter. From food to health. Have any friends or family

members who are uptight about their bodies, their babies and their brains?

Books on health, baby care and the brain drain that comes with life, are available at all four stores.

Eye-catching titles for those friends with particular woes: **Teach Yourself Relaxation**, (for almost anyone you know); **Beyond Blame—A New Way of Resolving Conflicts in Relationships** (a combined present for your married friends); **How to Win Friends and Influence People**, for the particularly ambitious, and finally, one that applies to our part of the world in particular: **What's Left To Eat?**—a book on the safety of food.

On the same note, a title worthy of mention here (for your radical feminist friend) is **What Makes Women Sick—Gender and the Political Economy of Health**. The book is available at Philadelphia and Sharbain.

Then there is always something for those who opt not to think too deeply: Amman Bookshop stocks a massive amount of best-sellers by authors with names as ornamental as their styles and content: Georgette Heyer, Ben Bova, Dean Koontz, Judith Krantz, Faye Kellerman and others.

Amman Bookshop also stocks Penguin publications, with randomly selected modern English novels. But of more local interest, books on the archaeology of Jordan, with one impressive volume on the excavations of Jabal Al Qala' entitled **The Great Temple of Amman—The Architecture**, a detailed account of the architectural nature of the Roman temple in the Amman citadel.

And for those of your friends with an eye for graphics, Philadelphia Bookshop has original lithographs of the Holyland by David Roberts and Bartlett, an appropriate gift at this time of year.

Also of important note is the new publication on Petra, with photographs by Ammar Khammash. (Is he a photographer as well? And do the eyes of an architect/designer/cultural engineer extraordinaire and now photographer, see a different Petra altogether?)

The great thing about book-hunting is that there's always a handful of books that belong to no particular section, but which may sound just right for someone you know. A book on the only way to stop smoking? Quotations for lovers? A book on scarves? Well, maybe for that cousin who thinks she's got taste.

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A special season for special giving

NO BETTER present than that present which is most needed.

In all holiday spirits, donations to the needy are constantly solicited and as always, people's generosity is relied upon. This year, the Jordan Times decided to make your act of giving easier by informing you of the charity organisations available to receive your donation.

The General Union for Voluntary Societies (GUVS) is responsible for funding 612 societies in 12 governorates in the Kingdom.

Of these societies, 196 are specialised in certain fields such as child care, senior citizens, orphans, income generating projects, rehabilitation of disabled persons and health, while 416 societies work in various fields, which include vocational training, child care, financial help for needy families, and community development.

GUVS distributes funds according to the amount of services contributed to the community, as well as the field and location of the society.

To donate your items or money, call the GUVS and let them know where you would like to have your donation sent. Here's a sample of some of the charitable societies in GUVS to help you choose.

Child care societies are funded annually with JD 300,000 to provide kindergartens with equipment and games, as well as training for teachers. GUVS provides care through the different societies to 28,150 children all over the Kingdom.

Income-generating projects for needy families aims to raise the economic standard of living for these families by encouraging them to depend on themselves in setting up their own projects.

The loans do not exceed JD 700 per individual and are paid back in easy term instalments.

The loans are granted after presentation of the necessary guarantees and proof of ability to carry out such projects.

The Charitable Piastre project started in 1986 and aims to finance the education of underprivileged children and provide rehabilitation equipment for disabled persons.

As a result of this project the GUVS provided financial support to 1,130 students at universities as well as schools between 1986 and 1993.

The Social Cooperation Project began in 1986 and accepts all kinds of donations including food, clothing, bedcovers, household equipment, all of which are distributed among the most needy societies responsible for orphans, senior citizens and disabled persons as well as directly to underprivileged families and rural schools located in underprivileged areas.

This project has helped tens of thousands of Jordanians.

The Rehabilitation Project For Disabled Persons: As a result of the high cost and accommodation services required, only 40 societies catering to 3,755 disabled persons are involved in this field. This project finances day care centres with unified designs, greenhouse projects, newspaper stands for disabled persons and a joint project with Hussein Medical City to teach Jordanians occupational therapy.

Donations to all the societies listed below can be

made through GUVS.

Beit Al Amal for the multi-handicapped is located in Yajouz.

The school caters to 100 children in its boarding school, and 50 children in the day care centre. It provides medical and social care, therapeutic and recreational activities, rehabilitation and integration of disabled children into the society.

The Islamic Boarding School for Blind Women is located in Muqablen. The school which caters for 20 underprivileged students from the different governorates of the Kingdom is the only school for blind women in Jordan.

The school accepts financial and in-kind donations such as winter clothes for children between the ages of seven to 18, shoes, food, sugar, rice, tea, fruits, games and dolls. Tel. 756055

Ibn Sina for Cerebral Palsy provides medical care and equipment for children suffering from cerebral palsy, and has a physical therapy centre for rehabilitation. Tel. 674634.

Petra for Disabled Persons is located in Mansura, Ma'an Governorate.

The society, which was established in 1991, provides care for children with hearing difficulties and for the mentally handicapped through social adjustment and rehabilitation programmes. It also provides assistance to the families of disabled persons. Tel. 83684 (Mansura, Ma'an).

Societies working in more than one field: Donations to the following societies can also be made through GUVS.

Women of South Azraq for Social Development is located in Zarqa.

The society trains women on income-generating projects, it also provides financial and in-kind assistance for needy families.

Balawneh for Charity is located in Balawneh, Irbid. It is responsible for a day care centre, and provides financial and in-kind assistance for needy families.

Al Shahabih for Charity is located in Shahabih, Karak. It operates a day care centre, provides financial assistance for needy families, trains women on income-generating projects, gives extensive classes for Tawjihi.

Salt Islamic Charity Society is located in Salt, Balqa. The society operates two centres: a day care centre and a vocational production training centre. It also provides financial and in-kind assistance for needy families.

Al Za'tary for Social Development is located in Al Za'tary, Mafraq Governorate. It operates a day care centre and a children's club; a training project for agricultural production, as well as financial and in-kind assistance for needy families.

Ras Muneef for Social Development is located in Ras Muneef, Ajloun. It plans to provide assistance for the families of handicapped children, but for the time being the society operates a day care centre and organises income-generating projects for women, which include training on tricot weaving. The society also provides financial and in-kind assistance for underprivileged families. Tel. 93-470150, Ras Muneef, Ajloun.

Jerash Women for Charity is located in Jerash, and specialises in training women on income-generating projects and local handicrafts. The society operates a day care centre and a local handicraft centre. It also provides financial and in-kind assistance for underprivileged families. Tel. 452299, Jerash.

The society operates one classroom for children with hearing difficulties, a day care centre and a club, vocational training for women, as well as financial and in-kind assistance for needy families.

The Young Christian Society is located in Madaba.

The society operates a day care centre, trains women to become finan-



A Beit Al Amal therapist conducts vocal exercises with a handicapped child (top). Her Majesty Queen Noor greets children at the SOS village in Tabarbour

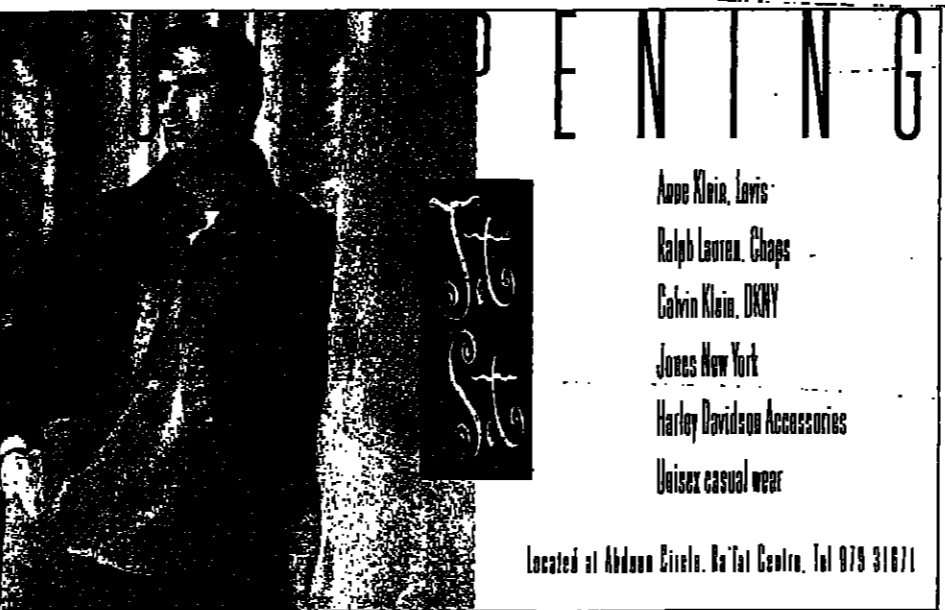
cially sufficient, and provides financial and in-kind assistance to needy families.

The Local Support Group concentrates its efforts on the Talbieh camp, located outside the village of Jiza, near Queen Alia International Airport.

It has 70 orphans. This year, the group hopes to build a mother and child health centre. The group works under the umbrella of the Jerusalem Forum. For donation information: Tel. 823222.

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WHERE WOULD the holidays be without hotels and restaurants? As if by tradition Amman's hospitality establishments and eateries annually plan a December calendar chock-full of activities for the young and the young-at-heart, including the various and sundry fanfares to welcome in the new year.

The Jordan InterContinental Hotel says it has dedicated the entire month of December to make its patrons' holiday season complete.

On the 14th, the hotel will start with its annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

A children's choir will sing Christmas carols, a giant Ginger Bread House will be on display, and Santa Claus himself is scheduled to make an appearance.

The hotel will offer complimentary Glühwein, hot chocolate, pudding, minced pies and many other goodies.

At the Café Boulevard, a wide selection of ginger bread, Christmas puddings, Christmas stollen, cakes and chocolate will be on sale until Dec. 28. You can order your holiday turkey and trimmings by calling the folks at the Food & Beverage Department at 641361 ext. 5, allowing 48 hours advance notice.

Christmas Eve dinner at El Pasha Restaurant promises a four-course dinner, including roast young turkey breast stuffed with chestnut giblet sauce, fresh avocado with lemon zabaglione, shrimps with French dressing, smoked salmon and a surprise dessert. The dinner is for the whole family and will feature live entertainment.

On Christmas Day, the hotel's Grand Ballroom will be the site of a "traditional family lunch," where Santa will be handing out goodies and gifts for the children.

With live music and raffle prizes, families will select from a buffet menu of sea food, poached hamour in Bellevue quiche Lorraine, stuffed ham, roast, cold turkey, roast sirloin, and lamb ouzi.

Then on New Year's Eve patrons have a choice of celebrating at the Grand Ballroom with live music featuring the famous singer Sabbah Fakri, a belly dancer and a DJ from 10:00 p.m. to 12:15 a.m.

And the entertainment will continue. Some grandiose raffle prizes are in the offing including a car and airline tickets to InterContinental Hotels in Athens, Bangkok, Cairo, Geneva, Hurghada, London, Paris and Vienna. The Okaz and Bukhara restaurants will also offer New Year's Eve dining.

The Amman Marriott Hotel gets in the holiday spirit with a giant Christmas tree towering over its multi-levelled lobby and a programme of Christmas carols sung by schoolchildren from Amman. (The hotel asks that those interested call 607607 for a schedule of this programme).

Also planned, on Dec. 24, is a special "Night Before Christmas" ceremony in The Garden, with a bonfire and a choir singing your favourite yuletide melodies.

If baking is not your forte or your oven just happens to be on the blink, you might try La Patisserie which the hotel has transformed into a gingerbread house filled with Buche de Noël (yule log cakes) and Christmas puddings. In fact, if you order ahead, the Marriott chefs will roast you a turkey complete with all the trimmings.

The Marriott also plans to offer a Christmas Eve dinner, Christmas Day lunch, New Year's Eve Dinner and its famous first of the year Breakfast Buffet Extravaganza.

For the bon vivants Il Castello has started offering a set luncheon menu for the business sector and the "let's have lunch" crowd.

The menu provides different courses on a daily basis. It includes Italian appetizers, pasta, veal, beef, fish or chicken dishes and desserts. All these accompanied with a free glass of sparkling white wine or a glass of Italian or French red or white wine.

The restaurant has been dressed up for Christmas, and gourmet food items including oysters, mussels, lan-



goustines, noix de Petoncle corail, fresh salmon, smoked duck, Italian bresacia, caprese, coffee, framboises, berries and currants were being served.

At the Regency Palace Hotel, kids and parents can enjoy a special holiday lunch buffet on Dec. 23 with fun, gifts and music. For Christmas eve, the hotel's Al Madafa Restaurant is offering dinner buffet and live entertainment by Lebanese vocalist Sonia Attieh and belly dancer Hadil. And on Christmas Day a lunch buffet will be served, also at the Madafa. Up on the Rooftop Al Alali Night Club, New Year's eve will girate in with Hiyam Said and Hadil.

The Forte Grand Hotel put together a full programme starting with buffet luncheons at the Coffee Shop every Friday, at which they promise to "look after the kids," feed them with a special buffet of their own and throw in a clown as well to keep the tots entertained. On Friday, Dec. 22, the hotel will offer a children's Christmas party with a Christmas show by Renas, a kid's buffet, Christmas goodies and a take-home gift from Santa. Christmas eve dinner at the Andalusia Restaurant will be by candlelight with a set menu and live entertainment. If Chinese cuisine is your fancy, the Forte Grand's China Town Restaurant is offering four special set menus for the season for a unique Christmas eve experience. Christmas Day lunch will be offered at the Coffee Shop, and Santa, still in town, will be there to have fun with the whole family. The Coffee Shop will also offer a Boxing Day buffet to extend the Christmas spirit and keep the kids entertained. The hotel's chefs are also whipping together Christmas goodies, such as turkeys, cakes, panforte, yule logs and even marrons glacés from their Box Office. Call 696-311 in advance to order the turkey. In store for New Year's eve is an "extravagan" seven course menu accompanied by live entertainment at the Andalusia Restaurant. And New Year's eve dinner will be held at China Town Restaurant with a special oriental menu. At Jugglers Bar New Year's eve celebrations will rock all night with entertainment by Music Box. The morning after you can have your first champagne breakfast of 1996 at the Coffee Shop or Andalusia restaurants.

Special menus on Christmas and New Year's eves and a party on New Year are planned, and, in tune with the Christmas spirit, Il Castello has offered as a "gesture of thanks" free lunches and dinners for foreign workers belonging to humanitarian organisations and working with the needy and the handicapped in Jordan.

The restaurant has expressed willingness to continue, during the holiday season, to offer similar services to interested organisations. It will, the owners say, host a free lunch for 10 needy children around Christmas time and is open for suggestions. So if you have any, hurry before Santa comes.

As for "Turino in December", the restaurant promises "fun and prizes for the whole family and special gala dinners during the festive month". The programme's goodies include, among others, a Spanish night on Dec. 14 where flamenco music and popular songs from Spain, video clips of famous Spanish artists and a "special sumptuous" menu will mark the fiesta. On Dec. 16, and keeping on the Mediterranean shores, a "Street Side Italia" video clips from Italy and a popular fair of Italian pasta "made to your order", followed by a main course of chicken, veal or fillet of beef and dessert, will be on offer. On Dec. 18, "Eat As You Can" means you can eat "anything on the menu", and on Christmas Eve a special dinner with turkey and entertainment will be offered to party-goers. Christmas day promises to create an "atmosphere filled with joy, music and live entertainment and a long list menu." New Year's Eve will usher in 1996 with "liveliness and abundance, live bands and a seven-course menu", "a must" the owners say, and "very exclusive."

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Just when you thought you had run out of ideas

Characters

A new concept shop selling Disney characters in different

sizes of plush and figurine toys. There are the Sesame Street characters, Mickey, Minnie and Donald Ducks. But the best selection is the Lion King section, that movie with the Hamlet-like plot-line adapted for kids. What adult didn't cry over the tragic death of Simba's father? In large plush figures, there are all the characters of the movie to choose from, starting with the evil uncle, Scar, to the escapist hippyish duo, Pumba and Timon. ("Akuna matata—it means no worries") and to the mystic baboonish elder, Rafiki. A cuddly something for adult or child.

The Disney books, which include Lion King, in Arabic and in original Disney illustrations are also stocked, as well as character straws, mugs, pencils, key-rings...

Natural Looks

Here's a shop where you can buy just about anyone you know a little something. For the environmentally aware, Natural Looks stocks toiletries and cosmetics that are "Not Tested on Animals." The products are also natural based, and as chemical free as possible. Soaps made

from oatmeal, jojoba, aloe vera and the odd but superbly nourishing goat's milk soap; bubble bath soaps, fruit soaps, animal soaps, bubble bath oils that are aromatherapeutic as well. There's a selection of essential oils (jasmine, patchouli, clary sage, eucalyptus, camomile, lemon, neroli and others) for those interested in natural medicine: evening primrose oils for moisturising, toning and cleansing the skin. For even more personalised items, perfumes according to the birthsign and candles that burn down to uncover your birthstone.

Tiger Stores

A store that's been around for ages, and a great place for buying items for people with a purpose in life. For those around you

with a love for a sport, here's where you find all types of accessories for horse-riders, campers, fitness gurus. Sleeping bags for the friend who's always borrowing yours, coolers, tents, riding equipment (a whip?) and for that person in your life who just won't exercise because she/he is too lazy to leave the house, how about a treadmill? (You won't be able to wrap it up). The store has a variety of indoor fitness equipment, sports and outdoor wear. For the young ones, basketball boards and playground swings (keep the kids off the streets). Fishing equipment for the highly optimistic and swimwear for anyone you know who's spending the holiday season in the southern hemisphere.

الاستاد احمد مع فهد

الشركة الأردنية لخدمات الدفع JP
١٨٠٥٧٠ فاكس ١٨٠٥٧٦، ١٨٠٥٥٤ هاتف
ص.ب ٩٣٠٠٦٦ عمان ١١١٩٣ الاردن

Dec. 19 is a public holiday

AMMAN (Petra) — All government ministries and public institutions will observe an official holiday on Tuesday Dec. 19 to mark Isra' Wal Miraj (the Prophet Mohammad's nocturnal journey to the heaven), a communiqué issued by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker said Tuesday.

Abdul Meguid set for second term

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid looks set for a second five-year term in office after winning the backing of two-thirds of the league's 22 members, sources said on Tuesday. League sources said 15 members have already supported Dr. Abdul Meguid's candidature — Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinians, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, the Comoros Islands and Egypt. Dr. Abdul Meguid is due to be sworn in for the new term at the pan-Arab body's ministerial meeting set for March.

Beirut ready to send troops to south

CAIRO (AFP) — Lebanon is prepared to deploy 25,000 soldiers in the south of the country if Israel withdraws from an occupied border zone, the Lebanese ambassador here said Tuesday. "Lebanon is seriously considering sending 25,000 troops to assure security in the south as soon as Israel withdraws its troops," Hisham Damashqiya told journalists after meeting Arab League chief Esmat Abdul Meguid. "The Lebanese national resistance will continue against the Israeli forces as long as they occupy South Lebanon, but (Beirut) is ready to stop this resistance once the occupation is over," he said.

Meeting opens on refugees

GENEVA (AFP) — Around 50 countries and international organisations met here Tuesday to consider aid for more than 3.5 million Palestinian refugees as part of the Middle East peace process. The working group for refugees created in 1992 will meet until Thursday. It has until now aimed at improving the refugees' living conditions and collected more than 990 million together with UNRWA, the relief agency for Palestinian refugees. The group is considering a series of proposals ranging from reuniting families, professional training and job creation projects to infrastructure projects, childcare measures and public health.

Militants attack Aden movie house

ADEN (AFP) — Militants smashed the windows of a movie house showing a James Bond film and tore down a poster of a woman, its owner and police said Tuesday. Police have opened an investigation into Sunday's attack by a group of bearded men and were hunting for suspects in the southern Yemeni city, but assistant police chief Ahmad Al Muthana downplayed the attack. "The incident, which must not be exaggerated, is the work of fanatics," Colonel Muthana told AFP.

Kohl letter bomb explodes in transit

BONN (R) — A letter bomb addressed to Chancellor Helmut Kohl exploded in a post office in eastern Germany, the federal prosecutor's office said on Tuesday. The bomb, which had no stamp or return address, blew up a second time as explosives experts touched it on Monday, the prosecutor said in a statement. There were no injuries.

Egypt lauds Bhutto

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak praised on Tuesday the efforts by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to curb terrorism after the November suicide bombing of Egypt's embassy in Islamabad. "Bhutto has faced seriously and firmly all matters linked with terrorism," Mr. Mubarak said at his first meeting with newly-elected deputies from his ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

Parliament voices total support for policies

(Continued from page 1)

expression should be promoted, urging the mass media to upgrade their performance to be able to reflect the real image of Jordan locally and abroad. He noted that this requires the press to act in a responsible manner.

"We also support Your Majesty's call for refraining from demagoguery, denial of achievements, character assassination and defamation and your affirmation that our pulpits should remain committed to the teachings of our religion and the principled stance of our nation, distanced from extremism and the exploitation of religion to achieve personal or sectoral gains," he added.

"The Senate commends Your Majesty's continued support of our democratisation process in an atmosphere of freedom and pluralism and within a framework of true belonging and commitment to national higher interests," he said, stressing that democracy should in no way mean chaos or undermining national unity and achievements.

"The Senate pledges to you, Your Majesty, that it will fight anti-democratic forces with their same sword and to end those phenomena which are alien to our society and the values of our nation in accordance with the Constitution and the law," said Mr. Lawzi.

Mr. Lawzi also stressed that the Jordanian judiciary should have its fair share of care and support to preserve its independence and safeguard citizens' rights.

Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour reviewed in the House's reply to the Speech from the Throne Jordan's achievements under the leadership of King Hussein, as well as His Majesty's stands on Arab causes.

Jordan, he said, was in the forefront in all battles of the Arab Nation, offering an example to others in self-denial and sacrifices, always sincere to the principles of the Great Arab Revolt launched by the King's great grandfather Sharif Hussein Ben Ali.

Jordan offered Palestine all it could and willingly received shocks and tragedies as a result, and it is still sincerely supporting the Palestinian people to enable them to regain their full rights, including their right to have

national independence and establishing their independent state on their national soil, Mr. Srour said.

He added that Jordan was still persevering in all arenas to serve the cause of Jerusalem, which he described as "the diamond of Islam and the essence of a just and lasting peace, the peace that can never be so except with having our Palestinian brethren regaining their legitimate rights and having Israel withdraw from Palestinian land and all occupied Arab lands in Lebanon and Syria."

He said the King raised the theme of public participation in decision-making and acted as a defender of human rights, dignity and freedom, adding that Jordan was looking forward to having political pluralism taking roots in other parts of the Arab World.

"In one part of this great Arab World, the tragedy of the brotherly Iraqi people arises in an unprecedented manner," said Mr. Srour, expressing support for the King in his pursuit to preserve the Iraqi people's unity and the integrity of Iraqi lands, and endeavours to end the "unjust siege imposed on this glorious people which is suffering the ugliest form of suffering, falling victim to hunger, sickness and a strangling feeling of isolation from its brethren."

"We are fully confident that Your Majesty is exerting your utmost to save Iraq from its plight, to lift the destructive siege and end the unjust international sanctions which inflicted very serious, unmatched damages to the Iraqi people. Our hearts and wills will remain with our Iraqi brethren until their dawn arises and their harsh, destructive suffering comes to an end," Mr. Srour said.

Mr. Srour said that placing Jordan on the international economic map requires security, stability, moderation, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, open investment climate and an independent judicial authority.

He said democracy was a source of pride and a way of life for Jordan, pledging to promote it and stop any power impeding it.

"Democracy is a source of our pride and a way of our life and we will persevere to deepen it and make it more

mature, without having it undermined by voices contradicting the consensus of our people, the Constitution and the National Charter. Such voices will make us stop them from committing the crime of stabbing democracy by abusing democracy's name through constitutional and legal means in a country governed by justice, the rule of law, integrity of the judiciary and the separation among the three branches of authority," he said.

He said democracy could only be strengthened by having responsible democratic practices and by having continuous revision of the progress of the democratisation process with the objective of protecting the internal front and national unity from those trying to undermine it or advocating sedition.

The House speaker called for addressing social and economic imbalances and developing the less-fortunate areas of Jordan, urging solutions to the problem of unemployment and the difficult living conditions facing citizens.

He also called for activating financial and administrative monitoring in a bid to resolve administrative deterioration, favouritism and other forms of administrative corruption.

Mr. Srour said mosque pulpits should in no way be used for other than religious purposes and should be used to preserve national unity and stability, rather than for personal motivations.

He also said the House believes in the freedom of the press, "and views our national press as a fourth estate and a means of monitoring and national dialogue as well as responsible expression of views and a means to highlight modern Jordan's image and its great achievements."

After delivering the speeches, the two speakers presented His Majesty with a replica of the Parliament building.

The two meetings were attended by Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Prince Hamzeh, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Al Karaki and other officials.

Official says expulsion of Iranian is final

(Continued from page 1)

two foreign ministers was witnessed by the Tunisian foreign minister.

But despite the assurances, Jordan, which is closely monitoring the quick developments and changes in the region generally, feels that the situation requires decisive and quick steps to curtail any attempt at rocking the stability of the Kingdom,

the sources said. "Regardless of our brotherly relations with Syria, when it comes to our security we will not tolerate any hint of possible tampering with our stability to serve other countries' regional aspirations," one official source said.

Jordan, the only Arab country other than Egypt and

the Palestinians that has signed a peace deal with Israel and a firm supporter of a solution in Iraq that would alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, realises that the regional odds in such circumstances make it necessary for Amman to "be very firm in sending the right message to any country that may feel that Jordan can be weakened," the source explained.

Peres urges Assad to move towards peace

(Continued from page 1)

for a new impetus in the peace process following the telephone conversation between Presidents Clinton and Assad and in the light of new ideas put forward in Washington by the Israeli prime minister.

Mr. Peres, who was making his first visit to the United States since the Nov. 4 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin pledged in his address to Congress to keep Israeli partisan politics out of the peace process with Syria.

"To win peace is more important than to win elections," he said, referring to the October 1996 vote.

"We shall try to forge the peace with Syria and Lebanon expeditiously so that before the curtain of the 20th century will fall, we shall see before all of us the emergence of a Middle East peace," he said.

Mr. Peres also called for measures to fight international terrorism, telling lawmakers that "fundamentalism with a bomb is the nightmare of our age. We have to stop it."

He also praised U.S. leadership and told members of Congress who were preparing to hold debate on sending U.S. troops to Bosnia that "the world cannot permit itself to be without American leadership in these trying times."

"You cannot escape that which America alone can do. America alone can keep the world free and assist nations to assume the responsibility for their own fate," he said.

the slain prime minister was no more, his life-long commitment for peace remained alive.

Mr. Peres, who has previously served as prime minister and currently also holds the defence portfolio in the Israeli government, said he now was devoted to "only one thing: to bear the burden of peacemaking."

Mr. Peres, appearing on the NBC-TV "Today" programme, said he expected Mr. Clinton to try to bring Israel and Syria together "and not let this unusual opportunity ... run away or evaporate."

"We shall taste the life of a normal existence in our vicinity. This is now our major consideration," Mr. Peres said at a news conference with U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry, who he met after holding White House talks with Mr. Clinton on Monday.

Mr. Peres repeated the main peace theme of his two-day visit to Washington: A deal with Syria will pave the way for all but the most hardline of Arab states to normalise ties with Israel.

Mr. Clinton enthusiastically embraced Mr. Peres' vision of a new Middle East and pointedly praised him as "one of the architects of Israel's defence."

"The key to a lasting settlement in the Middle East is achieving peace between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon. Today, Prime Minister Peres and I agreed to redouble our efforts to achieve these goals," Mr. Clinton said Monday.

practical negotiations," the president said.

The United States, Mr. Clinton said, "is heartened that Shimon Peres will carry on, and together we will work to fulfil Yitzhak Rabin's legacy."

In his address to Congress, Mr. Peres recalled the words of President Johnson when he told Congress after the death of John F. Kennedy: "All I have I would have given gladly not to be here today."

The prime minister told Congress that "I stand before you with one overriding commitment: To yield to no threat, to stop at no obstacle in negotiating the hurdles ahead in seeking security for our people, peace for our land, tranquility for our region."

House and Senate members gave Mr. Peres an unusually long standing ovation and continued applauding as he made his way out of the chamber.

"I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, for your support and, first and foremost, your moral support," he said, adding that "let me assure you that never shall we ask your sons and daughters to fight instead of us."

Not mentioned was whether U.S. forces might eventually serve as peacekeepers on the border between Israel and Syria, a prospect many in Congress oppose.

Mr. Peres noted that as he spoke, Israeli troops were withdrawing from Palestinian towns on the West Bank "never to return as occupier. We don't want to occupy anybody."

Palestinian flag in Nablus

(Continued from page 1)

from buses which carried them from self-ruled Jericho. Israel has accelerated the handover under which parts of the West Bank will be transferred to the PLO. Nablus was the third of six towns after Jenin and Tulkarm to switch hands.

Palestinian officials face a daunting task keeping order in the city. They worry about the large number of guns in the hands of the public and a violent contingent of activists from the Fatah faction.

"We are living in a state of security chaos. There are a lot of weapons. And we reiterate that the Palestinian Authority will not allow anyone to threaten the sovereignty of law and the safety and the security of its citizens," said Tayeb Abdul Rahim, secretary-general of the PNA.

About 200 Fatah members were paid during the eight-year uprising against the occupation to rule by the gun. Despite the peace deal, these youngsters ignored PNA orders to lay down their guns.

A West Bank commercial centre, Nablus fears that despite self-rule, Israel will suffocate their business by sealing off Nablus in the same way self-ruled Gaza has been closed most of the past two years.

There was no sign Tuesday of Jewish settlers opposed to Palestinian authority.

On Monday Israeli police arrested a group of settlers who tried to reach Joseph's Tomb in Nablus in defiance of an Israeli army order closing the town to Israelis. Tuesday, a first joint Israeli-Palestinian patrol policed Joseph's Tomb, a holy site revered by the settlers.

But in Hebron in the south of the West Bank Palestinians threw two grenades Tuesday at an Israeli army patrol. No one was hurt but police sealed off the town and arrested at least eight Palestinians, Palestinian sources said.

Israeli officials cited "security reasons" for the early pullout from Nablus.

Israeli media reports said the army decided to move quickly after receiving warnings that Palestinian hardliners planned to attack Israeli ahead of their scheduled pull-out on Wednesday.

But the commander of Israeli forces in the West Bank, General Gaby Ophir, said, "Everything went quietly, which shows that we were right to move up our withdrawal."

Mr. Abdul Rahim pledged to act against lawlessness and armed bands in Nablus.

"The Palestinian Authority will be the guardian of our security," he said, blaming the years of Israeli occupation for "security deficiencies" and the presence of large numbers of unregistered guns in the town.

After all night celebrations featuring fireworks, dancing and nearly constant shooting into the air, Palestinian boy and girl scouts paraded up and down Nablus Tuesday carrying Palestinian flags.

Papandreou said 'stable'

(Continued from page 1)

Papandreou died, PASOK's parliamentary group would immediately elect a new prime minister and if he stayed in hospital for long then the executive bureau would ask him to resign and clear the way for his succession.

Opinion polls showed voters no longer wanted Mr. Papandreou, who swept to power as Greece's first socialist prime minister in 1981, to remain their leader.

Almost 79 per cent of PASOK voters asked by the independent Alko company said Mr. Papandreou should quit, according to the Dec.

Mubarak says no poll probe

(Continued from page 1)

Since each district has two seats in the 454-seat assembly, the appeals put 56 seats in question. The court is to rule on the appeals next Tuesday.

The court already ruled to cancel results for 112 seats, but the Interior Ministry appealed the judgement. A higher court is to judge the status of the seats on Monday.

Opposition and rights groups have called for a new vote, saying the ruling party won its landslide of 417 seats using "massive and blatant fraud."

Legal sources said the courts are likely to uphold

Official explains Jordanian approach to Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

apparently was his second in three months as he had travelled to Baghdad with a similar message to President Saddam in late June, just before the King paid a visit to France to meet with the new President Jacques Chirac.

The Jordanian initiative to provide the Iraqi opposition with a forum to open a dialogue among themselves and agree on a formula for change in Iraq has been prompted not only by President Saddam's refusal to do whatever necessary to end his people's suffering but also by Jordan's concern to prevent any bloodshed that may result from the already existing disunity among rival factions in Iraq (Sunnis, Shites and Kurds), the official explained.

"Jordan's offer stems from the belief that a stable post-Saddam era can only be attained by untangling the divide among the Shiite Muslim majority in the south, the Kurds in the north, and the Sunni Muslim minority, which is Saddam's power base."

King Hussein met with different Iraqi opposition leaders in London last month and presented his views concerning the situation in Iraq and offered to host a gathering to discuss arrangements for changing the current status quo in Iraq which "is harmful to Iraqis and to us," said the official.

While Jordan holds on to

its initiative of a dialogue among the three Iraqi groups, it was too early to discuss a timetable for any possible gathering since "the concept, shape, and context of such a meeting have not yet crystallised," the official said. Nevertheless, he stressed that King Hussein's initiative was met with enthusiasm and acceptance among some "legitimate leading Iraqi opposition figures."

Jordan's concern for Iraq's unity in case of any eventual change in its regime and its "political conduct towards Iraq" is part of Jordan's policy "to anticipate events to avoid remaining hostage to reactions," according to the official.

He said that on top of Jordan's refusal to sit idle while people in neighbouring and brotherly country are paying the price for their government's mistakes, Amman would also like to protect its interests both internally and regionally.

The trade sanctions against Baghdad have harmed Jordan's economy gravely, and in more ways than one: They had halted free trade with Iraq, once Jordan's largest trade partner, and over-loaded Jordan with additional financial burdens resulting from the exodus of about 33,000 Iraqis who arrived in the Kingdom during the Gulf war as well as about 350,000 Palestinians who were kicked out from Gulf States which were angered by Jordan's

stance during the crisis. While Jordan still imports all its oil from Iraq under a special U.N. deal allowing the Kingdom to export \$450 million worth of goods, mainly food and medicine, in return for its oil supply, Jordan has lost about \$400 million in exports to Baghdad.

On a regional level, the official said that Jordan's initiative will only be successful if backed by regional parties.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria have expressed scepticism at "the unification of the Iraq opposition" under the leadership of General Kamel, widely seen as a former back-bone of the Iraqi regime during its most aggressive tactics against Kuwait.

But the official affirmed that Jordan's proposal does not entail the nomination of Gen. Kamel as the head of any such unified organisation to be entrusted with overseeing a "peaceful transformation" in Iraq.

He also rejected suggestions by some Egyptian officials that the Jordanian leadership was aiming to restore the Hashemite monarchy to Iraq, ruled by King Hussein's cousin King Faisal II until his death in a 1958 coup, and he dismissed accusations by Syria that Jordan was seeking to divide Iraq along the lines of ethnic groups.

While Jordan's priority is to ensure Iraq's national unity, other countries are unfortunately "more concerned with regional interests."

Serbs release two French pilots

(Continued from page 1)

armed peace force for Bosnia insisted on full freedom of movement for his troops and warned that anyone trying to oppose the mission would be "neutralised."

"We're not going over there as cowboys looking for a fight. We're going over there as a well-trained, well-disciplined, well-led and very, very capable force," U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith said. "We know what our mission is, we know what our tasks are and we know what the agreement says," he added.

"Our intent is to live by that agreement and we intend that the parties to do it as well," Adm. Smith said in an interview with news agency correspondents.

"The rules are that our force will not be stopped, we will not be inspected, we will not be checked for ID cards and if someone attempts to stop us we will deal with that in a way that neutralises the problem," he said.

Robust rules of engagement would allow the 60,000-strong force, including 20,000 U.S. soldiers, to deal "right then and right there" with any perceived threat from snipers or so-called "rogue elements" opposed to the peace deal, he said.

"I can assure you that if we spot a sniper he will be taken out immediately. He will be neutralised," Adm. Smith said.

Asked whether that meant "kill," he said minimum necessary force would be applied but added: "I don't intend to fire over their heads and we don't intend to shoot

Juppe vows

(Continued from page 1)

communist-led CGT trade union, said there was "now a single goal: the withdrawal of the Juppe plan."

The prime minister had made concessions to striking train drivers on their special retirement pension scheme and has frozen a five-year restructuring plan of the debt-ridden state-owned SNCF railway company, which was bitterly opposed by rail workers.

Social security has an accumulated deficit of 230 billion francs (\$46 billion). The SNCF's accumulated debt is 175 billion francs (\$35 billion).

Mr. Vianet and Marc Blondel, head of the independent trade union Force Ouvriere, both said that the day of action was "not the last throes" of the conflict.

They spoke before taking part in a colourful and noisy march through Paris by more than 200,000 people, according to CGT estimates. Police, however, put the number at 50,000.

Mr. Blondel predicted that the final nationwide count of demonstrators on Tuesday would be two million and that Mr. Juppe's bluff would be called. The prime minister said recently his government would not survive if two million took to the streets.

"I think Mr. Juppe will get his answer Tuesday. Mr. Juppe said two million. I think there will be two million people in the street today," Mr. Blondel said.

But the leader of the moderate CFTC trade union, Alain Deleu, said that because of the Juppe concessions, "there is no reason to continue the SNCF strike."

Guide's last moments recalled

(Continued from page 12)

"The spade hit her... again and again and again."

"I remember thinking if she's unconscious she'll forget, everyone goes home, it's all a bad dream... I don't remember picking up the spade, but I hit her on the side of the head with the flat side, just hard enough to knock her unconscious. It didn't work."

"I hit her again the same as before and she slumped sideways. I knew she wasn't dead because I could still hear her breathing, she looked like she was asleep."

Ford said the killing took place after a night of heavy drinking in the eastern seaside resort Ayia Napa.

In his statement he described his frantic attempt to bury Jensen's body.

"Out of desperation and

fear I tried to scrape soil over with my hands and feet, one of the others threw a rock on her head. I wanted to cry, be sick, run, do anything but all I could do was scrape soil. Nothing in the world seemed to exist anymore except that."

Pernell claimed he saw Ford killing Jensen by beating her in the face and throat with a spade and that the tour guide had sex willingly with Fowler.

He also alleged his co-accused went off with Jensen and came back alone.

"I didn't try to stop them at any time because I was frightened."

The three soldiers, who have denied the charges, showed little emotion as the gruesome details were read out in court. Ford sat with his head lowered, Fowler blank-faced and Pernell constantly scribbled notes to his lawyer.

British options open in row

(Continued from page 12)

compatible with his diplomatic status. David Hawkes will have to leave the Great Jamahiriya (Libya) before 25th December," the Libyan news agency IANA said.

The last Arab diplomat to be expelled by Britain was Khamis Al Ajili, an administrative attaché at the Iraqi embassy, who was ordered out in October in circum-

stances similar to the expulsion of Mr. Bazelya.

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad has been investigating the murder last month of Ali Abu Zeid, a 54-year-old Libyan dissident stabbed to death in his west London shop.

British police have declined to comment on a possible connection between Abu Zeid's death and the Libyan government.

Deficit seen lower despite weak oil prices

Saudi construction sector grows but debt problem persists

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Saudi construction sector, the second biggest after oil, is growing after an improvement in crude prices but the government is still indebted to local contractors, according to a bank study published by the daily Al Khaleej.

Although the government has earmarked large funds to pay outstanding dues to the contracting companies, many still suffer from the debt forcing them to cut spending and jobs, said the study by Henry Azzam, chief economist at the National Commercial Bank, the biggest Saudi bank.

Around three billion Saudi riyals (\$800 million) in cash was disbursed to local contractors this year while others got a total of 5.5 billion riyals (\$1.46 billion) in government bonds.

But generally, a number of contractors are still affected by the delay in payment of their dues and are suffering from liquidity shortages and the growing burden of borrowing from commercial banks in the kingdom, said the study.

Such difficult financial

conditions of the contractors have hurt their ability to compete in tenders for new projects and forced some of them to reduce expenditure and lay off workers," it added.

The government debt to contractors emerged a few years ago, when Saudi coffers were hit by the decline in oil prices, large payments for the 1991 Gulf war and a sharp drop in overseas reserves caused by persistent withdrawals.

Weak oil prices have forced Riyadh to slash state spending to nearly \$40 billion a year from more than \$60 billion in early 1980s.

This has directly affected growth as state spending in Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf oil producers is the wheel of economic activity given the relatively limited role of the private sector.

But the private sector has started to pick up in reforms triggered by the decline in crude prices and Saudi economic woes.

"There is a remarkable growth in the private construction sector in Saudi Ara-

bia. This is reflected in the expansion and building of several schools and hospitals, new commercial centres, offices, hotels, housing complexes, recreation centres and factories," Mr. Azzam said.

He said the value of building contracts jumped by nearly 94 per cent in the first half of 1995 over the same period of last year. Some 170 contracts have been awarded in 1994 and the first half of 1995 with a total value of more than 28.2 billion riyals (\$7.52 billion), he added.

Mr. Azzam's figures showed the contribution of the contracting sector to the gross domestic product (GDP) was forecast to grow to 40 billion riyals (\$10.66 billion) in 1995 from 39.1 billion riyals (\$10.42 billion) in 1994. But its share would likely decline to 8.8 per cent from 8.9 per cent due to an increase of around one per cent in the GDP.

Meanwhile, experts say that Saudi Arabia's budget has started to regain balance and the deficit could further decline in the next few years as the world's top oil produc-

er pursues austerity measures.

Although oil prices will likely remain weak in the near future, Riyadh's decision to adopt a rational budgetary policy will keep the deficit at a minimum level without risking a sharp economic downturn, they said.

"Saudi Arabia appears serious about tackling the budget deficit as it has been cut to its lowest level in 10 years," a Riyadh-based economist said.

"If the kingdom sticks to its stated policy of rationalising expenditure, then the deficit will even be lower in the next few years and it could remain below three per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP)."

Saudi Arabia, hurt by low crude prices, had projected a budget deficit of around \$4 billion in 1995, less than half the 1994 shortfall of nearly \$10.6 billion.

But King Fahd said last month the actual deficit could be halved by the end of the year due to an improvement in oil prices.

The drop in crude prices

over the past decade has created a persistent budget deficit in Saudi Arabia. In the absence of other major sources of income, it was forced to seek external loans and withdraw from its overseas assets to shore up the shortfall.

The lower income combined with large payments for the 1991 Gulf war to push the deficit to a record \$33.6 billion, which was also financed from loans and withdrawal from the overseas investments.

The persistence of a large deficit spurred a rare call from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last year on Saudi Arabia to act.

"The Saudi government is adopting a very active policy to redress its economy not just because of the IMF call but because it believes the previous policies no longer conform to the current situation," a Saudi banker said.

"It realises oil prices and production will not see any major increase in the coming years. So it has to be more careful in spending, develop other sources of income and urge the private sector to play

a stronger role," he added.

Saudi Arabia is set to spend an average \$40 billion a year until 1999 under its sixth five-year development plan, much lower than the expenditure in the previous plans, according to bankers.

They said the spending cut would not be at the expense of growth as it would be offset by an upturn in the private sector given incentives for its local investments and plans to privatise key public institutions. They referred to an average four per cent growth in that sector in the past three years.

Another key source of income is its petrochemical industry, which is set to fetch more funds due to expansion in production.

Earnings from chemical exports nearly doubled to 4.9 billion Saudi riyals (\$1.3 billion) in the first nine months of 1995, the highest ever.

Revenues will further increase as production will rise to around 25 million tonnes in 2000 from 20 million tonnes currently.

Bankers said they expected the Saudi economy to main-

tain positive growth rates in the next five years due to a projected upswing in the private sector and higher non-oil income from chemicals and hikes in services fees.

"The targeted 3.8 per cent growth in the sixth development plan could be achieved but this depends mainly on the private sector," one banker said.

"The budget deficit could also be lower unless there was a collapse in oil prices. But the outlook here is that prices will stabilise at \$15-\$16, meaning a bit more than \$40 billion in annual income for the Saudis," he added.

Saudi Arabia produces eight million barrels per day and the level will unlikely see any major rise in the near future as most of the growth in world demand is being met by independent producers.

There is also the likelihood of Iraq's return to the market after the end of the United Nations embargo, a factor that has combined with the excess world supplies to keep prices at nearly \$4 below OPEC's target of at least \$21 a barrel.

Asians dominate UAE banking sector

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Indians and Pakistanis continue to dominate the United Arab Emirates (UAE) banking sector despite attempts to increase the number of national employees, local newspapers reported Tuesday.

Workers from India and Pakistan account for around 57 per cent of the total banking employees of nearly 12,000 while nationals do not exceed 9.3 per cent, they quoted Humaid Qatani, director of Emirates Institute for Banking and Financial Studies, as saying in a lecture.

"The UAE banking sector is facing challenges, mainly the reluctance of nationals to join this sector," he said.

"This is due to the absence of a comprehensive plan to develop human resources in the banking sector, disparity in employment policies in banks and the absence of a social security system in the private sector."

The UAE Central Bank has instructed the Gulf country's 47 banks to employ more nationals to reduce reliance on foreigners in banking and other sectors.

But many banks have ignored the calls saying local employees demand higher salaries and lack experience.

"In some banks, the percentage of national employees is near zero," Mr. Qatani said.

He noted what he called the successful job nationalisation drives in the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with native employees in the banking sector reaching 82 per cent in Oman, 73 per cent in Bahrain, 51 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 37 per cent in Kuwait and 13 per cent in Qatar.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't permit a dictatorial friend to stop you from handling your own affairs objectively today and thereby successfully.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are ingenious now and will know how best to add to your present well-being. Use wisdom in spending or investing money.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have inspired ideas today for self-improvement so follow through on them. An influential friend can be of great assistance to you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Contact experts who can give you the advice and data you need today so that you can gain greater abundance and happiness.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If an disagreement has ensued with a partner today, don't hold a grudge but straighten out the matter sensibly.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get advice from an expert on how you can get support from a bigwig for some venture you have in mind. Be careful in motion.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Instead of criticising your mate, plan some recreation which will be pleasurable. Some little risk you take later in the day can pay off.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you have any additions to make to your home, this is a good day to plan it and get started. Show your devotion to those you love.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Go over any reports or documents carefully today for possible errors before delivering or handing them out.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Avoid spending too much for something practically worthless in the morning, and save your money wisely.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be more gentle in going after what you want today, and then you can gain it easily. Be charming to close friends and associates.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get your talents working through your own energies instead of seeking advice, for others are not cognizant of your actual position.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

GATT slips into history

GENEVA (R) — The GATT, revered and reviled global trade watchdog, slipped quietly into history Tuesday after five decades of pushing the world towards the open markets now widely seen as a panacea for international prosperity.

"It did its job too well," said one trade official as delegates from some 70 countries politely applauded the last speech at the final meeting of the contracting parties to the 1947 treaty that launched the GATT onto the world stage.

"It was an enormous success," the session was told by Renato Ruggiero, director-general of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which was born on Jan. 1 this year out of the seventh and last "trade round" under the GATT.

It made, said Mr. Ruggiero and Egypt's Ambassador

Mounir Zahran, chairman of the contracting parties over the 48th and last year of GATT's existence, a central contribution to the huge boom in the global economy after World War II.

"The economic growth of many countries has been increasingly stimulated by the growth of their trade, a fact made possible by the improved conditions for trade that we have realised through the various rounds of negotiations," said Mr. Zahran.

Formally the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that was both an agreement and an ad-hoc organisation counting 128 adherents in its last months, disappears, absorbed by the WTO, on Dec. 31.

By common consent disputes that marked its final years — Latin Americans

versus the European Union over banana tariffs, Mexico against the United States over bans on tuna imports — will also be consigned to history, or taken up again in the WTO.

Members — they were called contracting parties because the organisation behind the agreement did not officially exist — who have not yet finalised entry to the more powerful WTO will be admitted in the coming months.

Although it numbers only 112 countries at the moment, the new body expects to have at least 155 members within a few years representing nearly 95 per cent of world trade.

China and Russia, the major absentees, are knocking insistently on its doors. But it was not ever thus.

Although China under nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek was a founder member of the GATT when the first accord was signed in Geneva on Oct. 30, 1947, it pulled out promptly after the communists took power in Beijing in 1949.

GATT, the country's new rulers declared, was a "capitalist club" at the service of the tycoons of Wall Street and the London City and irrevocably hostile to real freedom and global economic justice.

Moscow, then the capital of the communist Soviet Union, scorned the fledgling body as "a colonialist creation bent on ensuring the domination of world imperialism over the toiling masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America."

Even the United States was not so sure it was a good idea. Congress, fearing a more formal body would put limits on its powers to legislate trade policy, scuppered proposals to turn GATT quickly into an international trade organisation.

As former colonies of the Western powers won independence during the 1950s and 1960s, they followed the Moscow-Beijing line — largely staying clear of the GATT as they built state-run or highly-protected economies.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

"Give me the remote control! I have a finger full of static electricity and I'm not afraid to use it!"

Shekel slumps to record lows on dollar

TEL AVIV (R) — The shekel slumped Tuesday to a record low on the dollar and dealers said talk of a possible devaluation of the Israeli currency was turning into a "self-fulfilling prophecy."

The shekel has fallen by 4.1 per cent since mid-October, from 2.9940 shekels to the dollar to a new low of 3.1160 on Tuesday.

"The dollar hasn't moved in two years. Now there are talks of budget cuts, interest rate reductions and devaluation. Since everyone is talking about devaluation, it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy," a banking source said.

In the past two years the shekel-dollar exchange rate has barely budged, as tight monetary policy spurred demand for local currency. Big businesses preferred to take out cheaper loans in foreign

currency and convert these currencies into shekels.

The central bank bought dollars, often on a large scale, to prop up a sagging basket of foreign currencies, used for pegging the shekel rate.

Businesses complained the strong shekel was hurting exports and analysts said a devaluation was only a matter of time.

When the U.S. currency began coming off its lows abroad recently it also strengthened against the shekel.

This trend gathered steam

recently when the treasury signalled it was studying possible budget cuts.

The market believes budget cuts would prompt the central bank to ease up on interest rates, making the shekel a less attractive currency for deposits.

"As long as fiscal policy is more restraining, it will permit the central bank to be less restraining in monetary policy," a spokesman for the Bank of Israel said.

Lower interest rates would naturally cause a decline in the shekel, bankers say.

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THE Daily Crossword by Matthew Higgins

ACROSS

- Sandwich type
- Transport
- Singer Elliot
- Roman poet
- of Two Cities
- Elliptical
- Step
- Tooth
- Latvian capital
- Sign
- U.S. evangelist
- Attorney general, once
- Dander
- Cigarettes
- Gives a rubdown
- Copier essential
- Magna —
- Adjective suffix
- Unmen
- Pub game
- Tarkenton
- Jacket type
- L
- Sword handles
- Engraving instruments
- Chewy candy
- Social insect
- Roger Bannister, e.g.
- "Author! Author!" actress
- Little demon
- Author Ambler
- Hangman's loop
- Object of adoration
- Indian city
- Ill-humored
- Unadorned
- Villain's look
- Like a conger
- Mimicking bird

DOWN

- Pueblo Indian
- Author Hunter
- Dodger
- Outfielder, once
- Lyrical poem
- Pilfered
- Corridor
- "Now — me down
- Perseveres
- Eye part
- Eager
- Icelandic narrative
- Gun down
- Out of order
- Pilsner, for one
- Minor or Major
- out (manages)
- Degrees
- Painter Claude
- Trading places
- Chi-chi
- Office factotum
- Gladden
- Feel
- Bistro
- Outstrip
- Drum's partner
- Money supply
- Cargo space
- East Indian sailor
- Flooding
- Unlucky
- Duck
- Craving
- Ireland
- Long ago
- Lamb's coat
- Dawn
- Enrally
- Big Blue letters

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

LACE RALE GAVES
AVES ISTIS OLIVE
SILT MITT FUSEE
TALES OF HOFFMANN
SNORTS EPERE
EAGER EVER VILE
GRIMM FAIRYTALES
OMNI ELEM ALLOT
SYSTEM APC
MUTT SILENT
GANTERBURYTALES
AROAR ELEC PAPA
STUNG ASCH STAR
TENSE MATE BELS

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

Former cigarette ad model sues tobacco companies

MIAMI (R) — A former actor who said he modelled for Winston cigarette ads of the 1960s and 1970s filed suit Monday against three tobacco companies, claiming they failed to warn him about the dangers of cigarettes.

Allan Levine, 55, who used the stage name Alan Landers, filed a civil lawsuit in West Palm Beach, Florida, alleging the tobacco companies violated Florida product liability laws by failing to label cigarettes as dangerous. Mr. Levine has had two operations for lung cancer since 1988.

The suit names as defendants the companies whose products Mr. Levine used since he started smoking at age nine — American Tobacco Co., makers of Lucky Strike, Brown Williamson Tobacco Corp., makers of Kool and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., manufacturer of Winston.

"I believe that they put out a production that is addictive and poisoning and it should have been labelled," Mr. Levine said. "If you see something labelled poison you don't use it."

"I didn't have the choice. They took away my freedom of choice," he added.

Mr. Levine's lawsuit joins a growing list of legal actions against tobacco companies. Four states — Florida, Mississippi, West Virginia and Minnesota — have pending lawsuits to force the companies to pay for medical costs incurred by smokers.

Mr. Levine's lawyer, Woody Wilner, said the actor's case is one of more than 100 individual lawsuits filed in various Florida jurisdictions challenging tobacco companies for alleged violations of Florida product liability laws. Mr. Wilner said the lawsuit

claims the tobacco companies deliberately misrepresented their cigarettes "by telling people they were okay when they weren't."

"This is a clear violation of the product liability laws," he said. "You have got to put a valid and correct warning on your product. You can't fudge it, you can't fib about it."

In modelling for R.J. Reynolds' Winston cigarettes, Mr. Levine said he

appeared in print and billboard ads picturing healthy, family-oriented activities. He said he was asked to smoke the cigarettes to make them look a certain way for the cameras.

"I smoked all day long. I would have to smoke it and get the ash perfect. It had to look very appealing," he said.

Mr. Levine, a resident of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, said his vocal cords were pa-

ralysed and his ability to breathe impaired during the second surgery and although the vocal cords have been repaired, he has been unable to resume his career.

Peggy Carter, spokeswoman for R.J. Reynolds, said the company could not comment on the case because it had not seen the lawsuit. She also said the company could not verify that Mr. Levine had been employed as a model for Winston.

As to Mr. Levine's stated allegation that he was not aware of the risks of smoking, she said, "I find it a little bit difficult to understand how someone can make that claim" in light of package

warnings that began in the 1960s.

A spokesman for Brown Williamson, which bought American Tobacco last year, was not immediately available for comment.

Mr. Wilner said he decided to use Florida's strong product liability laws to challenge the giant tobacco companies because people "are not told the truth about smoking."

"You don't have people walking around drinking rat poison, because it is labelled poison," he said. "We have a vague idea about (the dangers of smoking), but the tobacco industry keeps us off balance by denying it."

SPA: China tops software piracy list

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Pirated software in China represents some 98 per cent of the country's market, but illegal copying in Japan and other wealthy countries is more costly to manufacturers, a trade group said Monday.

The Software Publishers Association (SPA)'s annual report on global software piracy said China was the world's worst violator in percentage terms, costing legitimate software makers some \$188 million in 1994.

But in Japan, the piracy rate was 56 per cent and lax enforcement practices cost software publishers more than \$1.3 billion, the single largest country loss, the report said.

In the United States, pirated software was estimated to be 25 per cent of the market in 1994, down from 40 per cent a year earlier. Losses were estimated at \$1.04 billion.

India, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand as well as Russia and Eastern Europe were also cited for a high percentage of illegally copied software.

Overall, piracy was estimated to deprive companies of some \$8 billion in revenues, almost as much as the \$8.5 billion in legitimate global sales of business software.

"High national incomes, or high average personal incomes, do not by themselves predict low piracy rates," the report said. "Nations such as Italy, Japan and France have high national incomes but their low levels of enforcement encourage relatively high piracy rates."

In France, a 62 per cent piracy rate led to \$482 billion in losses and Italy had a 68 per cent piracy rate worth \$263 million, according to the report.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
NOTING BANK CHITERS MONEY - SHAREHOLDERS									
TELEPHONE: 601171 / 601179									
ORGANISED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 12/12/1995									
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	12/12/1995	CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER	12/12/1995	CHANGE
JORDAN BANK PSC	1020	243290	237,000	238,500					
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	126	548	4,350	4,360					
BANK OF JORDAN	3400	12748	3,450	3,750					
KHAYAT INVESTMENT BANK	2000	2145	1,410	1,710					
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	750	1877	2,490	2,500					
THE BUILDING BANK	5250	24728	4,770	4,710					
JORDAN TRADING BANK	221	563	2,710	2,750					
JORDAN GULF BANK	2475	2703	1,090	1,090					
JORDAN ISLAND BANK	1871	3795	3,460	3,470					
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	3950	13038	100	1,300					
BET ELZOL SAVVING-INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	450	1445	3,380	3,210					
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	13300	12223	910	910					
ORTADAMIA INVESTMENT BANK	5080	7618	2,720	1,510					
BANKS SECTION									
JAPANESE INSURANCE	700	2806	4,000	4,000					
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	100	228	2,400	2,980					
INSURANCE SECTOR									
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	110936	190801	1,690	1,730					
IRBID DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	3000	1630	1,210	1,210					
TRANS JORDANIAN ELECTRICITY	500	2700	1,920	1,950					
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	400	1012	2,520	2,530					
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1700	3028	1,750	1,790					
HEAD OFFICE INVESTMENT	1050	1867	1,040	940					
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONDOMINIUM HOTELS	6700	14606	2,180	2,180					
ARAB TRIPER FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	4800	15912	3,280	3,300					
JORDAN STATE UNIVERSITY	2975	3537	1,190	1,190					
UNIFIED CO. FOR CONSTRUCTION LAND TRANS.	17003	38567	2,120	2,230					
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	14250	14040	970	990					
SERVICES SECTOR									
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	11887	43190	3,610	3,640					
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	9072	86557	9,280	9,650					
THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	350	1150	3,380	3,400					
THE JORDANIAN INVESTMENT	700	3205	7,200	7,550					
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	778	37791	4,280	4,400					
RAPHA INDUSTRIES	250	538	2,150	2,180					
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	255	1886	7,100	7,400					
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	500	2650	5,150	5,200					
CIVILWORKS & HOUSING	26100	14652	1,580	1,600					
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	66600	95310	1,400	1,440					
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	320	388	1,820	1,830					
INTERNATIONAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	4281	1990	1,520	1,550					
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	1414	2345	1,630	1,690					
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	500	2462	2,800	2,940					
JORDAN SET-PRINTING	2000	4750	4,750	4,800					
ARAB CENTER FOR PRINTING & CHEMICALS	1050	1696	1,520	1,550					
SANTHER INVESTMENT	1700	5245	3,050	3,130					
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	14410	27182	1,850	1,900					
JORDAN TELEVISION RESOURCES CO.	4357	6237	1,430	1,430					
JORDAN TEE CABLE COMPANY	7627	5675	2,140	2,170					
EL-ZAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	33000	44925	1,340	1,370					
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	7802	11338	1,560	1,570					
UNION CHEMICAL & PETROLEUM OIL INDUSTRY									
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR									
	197948	405700	122,15	121,15					
GRAND TOTAL									
	402425	1026997	155,77	155,77					
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET									
			248103						
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET									
			146133						

Ministry gives merchants until Monday to reduce coffee prices

A review of news from the Arabic press

Ministry gives merchants until Monday to reduce coffee prices

MONDAY IS the deadline set by the Ministry of Supply for Traders to reduce coffee prices or face ministry action to force down prices. The ministry's secretary-general pointed out that customs statements for the past four months have shown coffee prices dropping, meaning that the amounts were imported since then at lower prices which did not reflect on the retail price to consumers. He stressed that coffee merchants should respond to the changes in international prices and lower local prices so as the ministry would not be forced to intervene another time by fixing prices. Key importers of coffee said they supply retailers at reduced prices of JD 3 per kilogramme but some of these retailers continue to sell one kilogramme of coffee for JD 6. The wholesalers blame the retailers for maintaining the high prices.

The Association of Foodstuff Traders Monday appealed to coffee merchants to reduce their prices noting that it was no secret that international coffee prices had fallen sharply. The association said that to maintain its credibility and reputation and to demonstrate that Jordanian traders are keen to observe free competition and accept little profit, merchants should lower prices also to avoid being criticised by the public and the press (Al Ra'i).

Only 18.6 per cent of Jordanians earn more than JD 500 per month

BY THE TIME office hours closed on Friday, 618,408 holders of supply cards obtained food coupons for 1996 out of a total 744,000 card holders registered at the Ministry of Supply. As such, the percentage of those who received food coupons stood at 81.4 per cent which translates into a total of 3,631,616 persons.

According to an authorised source at the ministry, those who were exempted from the list of beneficiaries represented 18.6 per cent of the registered card-holders. As such this small percentage represents the wealthy people and those who earn more than JD 500 a month (Al Ra'i).

Argentine fish may be unfit for human consumption

THE MUNICIPALITY of Greater Amman has seized hundreds of tonnes of imported Argentine fish on suspicion that it is not fit for human consumption. During an intensive campaign that covered fish stores and storages, the municipality closed three large refrigerated storages in Marka belonging to an importing company. The laboratory tests on samples of fish will be completed in a couple of days after which it would be decided on whether to destroy the fish or allow its sale in the market (Al Ra'i).

TCC cautions citizens from crooks

TELECOMMUNICATIONS Corporation (TCC) Director-General Walid Dweik has cautioned the public against some "crooks" who pretend they are TCC employees and collect money from families to provide them with telephone lines. Mr. Dweik said fees can only be paid to TCC offices in the country or through banks and post offices. The TCC warning was prompted by complaints that a gang had collected more than JD 2,000 from families in the Tareq suburb after posing as TCC employees (Al Dustour).

Panel to study cost of living

THE FINANCE Committee of the Lower House decided to recommend the formation of an independent panel to study the mechanism for calculating the cost of living and price indices. The panel will include officials from the Department of statistics and the chief of the Consumer Protection Society and other experts (Al Dustour).

Financial Markets

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 11/12/95	Tokyo Close 12/12/95
sterling Pound*	1.5335	1.5348**
Deutsche Mark	1.4444	1.4418
Swiss Franc	1.1697	1.1711**
French Franc	4.9865	4.9866**
Japanese Yen	101.15	101.37
European Currency Unit	1.2713	1.2706**

* USD for STD ** European Opening @ 9:00 a.m. GMT

Intercontinental Interest Rates Date: 12/12/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.62	5.50	5.31	5.18
sterling Pound	6.37	6.25	6.12	6.12
Deutsche Mark	3.93	3.68	3.62	3.56
Swiss Franc	2.18	1.93	1.81	1.75
French Franc	5.25	5.25	5.12	5.00
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
European Currency Unit	5.40	5.25	5.21	5.18

Interbank bid rates for currencies including U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Previous Metals Date: 12/12/1995

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Cm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Cm
Gold	388.50	7.70	Silver	5.23	0.100

* In Baer

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 12/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7088	0.7100
sterling Pound	1.0848	1.0902
Deutsche Mark	0.4907	0.4927
Swiss Franc	0.6055	0.6085
French Franc	0.1421	0.1428
Japanese Yen*	0.0076	0.0071
Irish Quilder	0.4378	0.4400
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira*	0.0443	0.0445
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 12/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.6680	1.8780
Lebanese Lira*	0.043725	0.044430
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8550	1.8610
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma*	0.2045	0.5125
Cypriot Pound	1.5180	1.5670

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.		
One U.S. dollar	1.3772/82	Canadian dollar
	1.4482/92	Deutschemarks
	1.6212/22	Dutch guilders
	1.1744/54	Swiss francs
	29.74/78	Belgian francs
	4.9916/66	French francs
	1598.49/9	Italian lire
	101.70/80	Japanese yen
	6.7080/80	Swedish crowns
	6.3910/60	Norwegian crowns
	5.6094/94	Danish crowns
	1.4145/57	Singapore dollars
	0.7402/07	Australian dollars
	7.7340/50	Hong Kong dollars
One sterling	\$1.5320/30	
Gold (ounce)	\$388.90/389.40	

ICR MARKETPLACE

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Charlton's veterans ready for one more battle

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — Jack Charlton has led Ireland to three major tournaments but each time only after a last-ditch scramble.

He could not have left it later on Wednesday when his ageing team takes on Holland in a play-off for the 1996 European Championship finals.

The result of his 93rd international match in charge of Ireland will decide if Charlton extends his tenure as the Republic's manager to a 10th year.

Charlton's ageing team, who lost three of their last four games in the qualifying group, have only been given one more chance because Northern Ireland beat second-place challengers Austria last month.

"Maybe it is time for a change, but if we can reach the finals I'll be there and, who knows, we could go from strength to strength," said the 60-year-old Charlton.

"We have had a few 'last chances' already. Now we've got to make this one count." Ireland's last-ditch tactics won places in the 1988 European championship and the 1990 and 1994 World Cups.

"The Dutch have beaten us twice in competitive internationals during the last seven years and we've only beaten them once in a friendly during that time."

"But I don't think they are the great side that they used to be, although still very good. There is a lot of talent there which will test us."

Charlton must gamble on midfielder John Sheridan.

The Ireland boss watched Sheridan's come-back from injury as a substitute for Sheffield Wednesday at Manchester United on Saturday, and must now decide whether that is sufficient to see him through a clash of this intensity — just six weeks after a knee operation.

Niall Quinn, the focus of Ireland's traditional high-ball attack, is suspended — the first game he has missed since a knee injury ruled him out in the 1994 World Cup.

Midfielders Roy Keane and Steve Staunton are also missing. Staunton has a pulled hamstring while Keane has not sufficiently recovered from hernia surgery. But Ireland are used to his absence as he played only three of the 10 qualifying games.

Tony Cascarino, international football's most-capped substitute, is out to prove Charlton wrong.

The former Millwall, Aston Villa, Celtic and Chelsea striker — now with fallen French giants Marseille — is in for Quinn.

"I've always known he only regarded me as a maximum 60 minutes player at international level and, in times gone by, he was maybe right," Cascarino said.

feat by the Czech Republic just before Ireland flew of the World Cup in America last summer.

But he scored a brilliant goal just two months earlier in a superb win over Germany in Hanover.

Irish fans will outnumber the 11,000 Dutch supporters nearly 3-1 at Liverpool and Dutch striker Dennis Bergkamp, who plays for London side Arsenal, admits: "It is certainly an away match for

time they met the Irish, in the last 16 of the 1994 World Cup.

His goal from a Marc Overmars cross sparked a 2-0 win, confirmed when Wim Jonk's tame 40-yard shot went through Patrick Bonner's hands and effectively ended the veteran Celtic goalkeeper's international career.

Past results:

1980: Ireland 2 Holland 1 (World Cup qualifier, Dublin).
1981: Holland 2 Ireland 1 (World Cup qualifier, Rotterdam).
1982: Holland 2 Ireland 1 (World Cup qualifier, Rotterdam).
1983: Ireland 2 Holland 3 (European Championship qualifier, Dublin).
1988: Holland 1 Ireland 0 (European Championship final, Gelsenkirchen).
1990: Ireland 1 Holland 1 (World Cup final, Palermo).
1994: Holland 0 Ireland 1 (Friendly, Tilburg).
1994: Holland 0 (World Cup final, Orlando).

EUROPEAN SOCCER

"But since I've played in France I feel fitter, faster and more confident with my touch."

Charlton admitted: "Tony has been showing us in training just how much he has improved since going to France."

"His touch is certainly better than it was and he's had plenty of experience with us, coming on as sub for Niall more often than not."

Cascarino, who has earned 30 of his 58 caps as a substitute and scored 12 goals.

His last start was in a somewhat embarrassing home de-

feat by the Czech Republic just before Ireland flew of the World Cup in America last summer.

"But we have played in intimidating atmospheres plenty of times before and it will not worry us."

"Ireland are a very tough team and we know they always fight to the end, but we believe we are the superior team and we must have the confidence to make our class tell."

Ireland can also count on three favourites from the host club Liverpool, Phil Babb, Jason McAteer and Mark Kennedy.

Bergkamp set Holland on the way to victory the last

Norwegian agent banned for life

PARIS (AFP) — Norwegian agent Rune Hauge, whose 440,000-pound backhand to George Graham cost the Arsenal manager his job, was banned for life by FIFA here on Monday.

The international football federation warned players, clubs and national football associations they would face punishment if they had any future involvement with him.

Hauge's lawyer, Dag Steinfeldt, told the Norwegian agency NTB that FIFA had no authority to suspend an agent as punishment and said Hauge would be taking legal action.

Graham was sacked in February for accepting a hand-out from Hauge, who gave the former Arsenal boss his cash following the transfers to the London club of Norwegian Pal Lydersen and Danish midfielder John Jensen.

The revelations cost Graham — who subsequently repaid the cash to the Highbury club — his job and also brought a 12-month ban from the English Football Association.

Hauge's involvement brought his suspension from FIFA's list of licensed players' agents and clubs were warned not to use him.

But Hauge ignored the ban, using an intermediary to become involved in the 840,000 pound transfer of Swedish international defender Pontus Karmark to Leicester from Gothenburg.

Hauge also advised fellow Norwegian Lars Bohinen over his controversial switch from Nottingham Forest to Blackburn for a mere 750,000 pounds, a transfer negotiated through Danish intermediary Frank Mathiesen.

"It has become evident that during his suspension he has continued to operate, even if through an intermediary, in the transfer of players despite his suspension," FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper said.

"When we introduced the system of licensed agents on Jan. 1 we knew it would be difficult to impose but were determined to do so," he added. "FIFA hopes people will work with the system, rather than against it."

"We will not take any action against players or clubs who have used Hauge during the period of his suspension but we are making it clear that in future any individuals or clubs who avoid our decisions will face the consequences themselves."

Cooper refused to be drawn on what any potential punishment might be but he made it clear that pressure would be put on the FA and other national federations to ensure clubs and players under their jurisdiction took heed of the decision.

"We call on all associations to support our policy and for them to call on their clubs to adhere more strictly to our system and ensure transfers are conducted only by recognised individual agents."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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"THE HAND"

Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ 6
♥ J 5 4
♦ A 8 5 2
♣ A 8 7 6 5

WEST
♠ 9 8 2
♥ A 10 3
♦ K J 10 4 3
♣ 10 3

EAST
♠ A K J 10 7 5
♥ Q 7 2
♦ Q 8 7
♣ 9 4

SOUTH
♠ Q 4 3
♥ K Q 8 6
♦ Q J 2
♣ Q J 2

The bidding:
East: 1NT, 2NT, 3NT
West: 1NT, 2NT, 3NT
Pass: Pass, Pass, Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♠.
Bob Hamman is currently rated No. 1 in the world. A bear of a man, he has an ego and a wit to match his size. The ego is necessary to be a truly great player; the wit is what makes him among the most popular players anywhere.

Together with Brent Manley, Hamman has written an autobiography describing his bridge career and the characters he has met along the way. At the Table: My Life and Times. DGM Publications, 314 pp., paperback. Available from The Bridge World, 39 W. 94th St., New York, N.Y. 10025. \$14.95 + \$2 postage and handling. It makes no secret of his likes and dislikes, and tells of his learning experience and life at the top with good humor.

Throughout are a number of excellent hands from his early days as king of the two-cent game as well as crucial hands from major championships.

The hand we like best is the above, in which Hamman was not even a participant! The hero was a club player called Jack Hancock. East had hesitated before the final pass — and the entire table knew why. Declarer turned to West and said: "Make your normal lead."

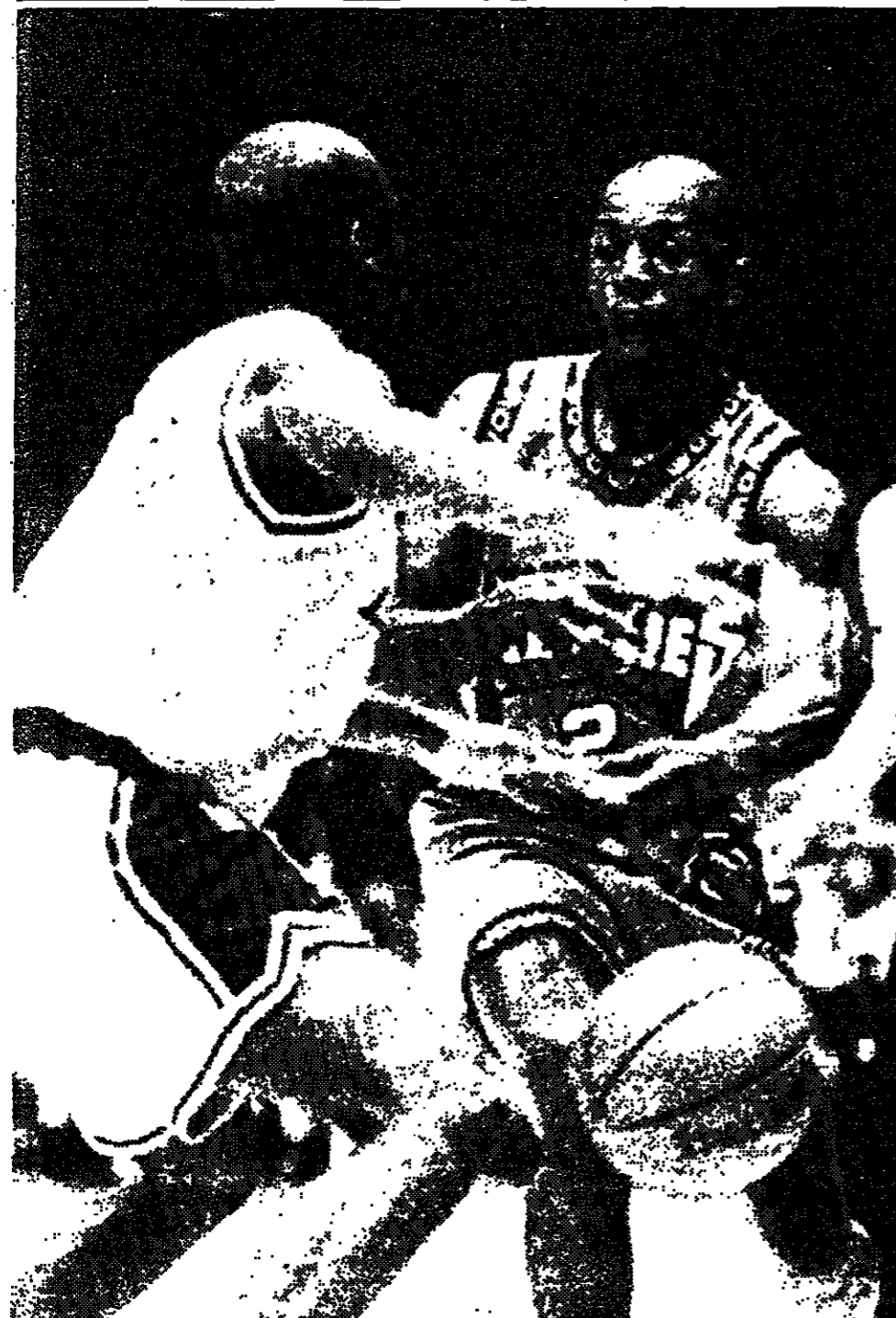
Naturally, West led the nine of spades. East played the 10 and Hancock ducked.

"What a stunning, totally remarkable play! It was simply years ahead of its time... Hancock had to be thinking in a manner different from other people."

"It looked to East as though playing the top two spades would be setting up a spade trick Hancock could never get once he chose to duck. East switched to a low heart. West got in with the ace and played another spade. East won with the king, but again he switched."

"Hancock now had nine tricks, which he took with gusto. I wish I had been there to see it."

A thoroughly enjoyable read!



The Vancouver Grizzlies Greg Anthony (right) reacts after the Los Angeles Lakers Nick Van Exel strips the ball from him (Reuters photo)

Jazz, Nuggets post wins

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Karl "Mailman" Malone delivered another strong game on Monday by scoring 24 points to help the Utah Jazz beat the short-handed Charlotte Hornets 110-100.

Malone, who was coming off a 51-point, 14-rebound performance against Golden State on Saturday, helped the Jazz (14-7) move within one game of the NBA champion Houston Rockets in the Midwest Division.

Charlotte (9-12), who were already without leading scorer Larry Johnson, lost point guard Khalid Reeves to a sprained left ankle in the second quarter.

Utah took control of the game with a 12-2 burst over the final 3:20 of the first half, keyed by three-pointers by John Stockton and Chris Morris. The Spart gave the Jazz a 53-46 halftime advantage.

"I think the run at the end

of the first half really gave them a lot of momentum," said Charlotte's Kendall Gill.

"At that point we were playing without our key player in the game and I thought everyone was feeling pretty well about themselves."

Morris had 22 points and Stockton added 18 points and 15 assists, the 11th time in 12 games he's hit double figures in assists.

Glen Rice scored 19 points and Gill added 18 for Charlotte.

In Philadelphia, Mahmoud Abdul Rauf had 22 points and 10 assists and Bryant Stinch added 21 points to lead the Denver Nuggets to their fifth win in a row, a 104-91 victory over the struggling Philadelphia 76ers.

Denver, winners of eight of their last nine games, reached the .500 mark after a miserable 1-8 start.

Rookie Jerry Stackhouse scored 20 points and Clarence Weatherspoon added 18 for the 76ers, who have lost 14 of their last 15 games.

The 76ers (3-16) were playing without newly-acquired Derrick Coleman, who is expected to miss 7-10 days with a sprained ankle.

Nuggets rookie forward Antonio McDyess went down with a sprained left ankle early in the second quarter and did not return. McDyess, the second player taken in the NBA draft, was taken to a hospital for X-rays, which revealed bone chips.

"A lot of guys stepped up," Nuggets coach Bernie Bickerstaff said. "The big guy (Mutombo) was in foul trouble. McDyess was playing good and he went down. It was our small guys, the Ellis's and the Smiths. They did a good job on the boards."

Premier League's 13th week kicks off today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The upcoming week's most awaited match is undoubtedly the Ramtha-Husseini clash scheduled for Friday at Irbid's Hassan Stadium.

Al Ramtha strengthened their lead atop the standings last week after an important 2-0 win over Kufroum. They tightened their grip at the time Al Hussein and Al Wihdat were held to disappointing 2-2 draws against Al Jazireh and Al Jalil.

While Al Wihdat's fans were understandably enraged with the result over the 11th placed team, it seemed the players were not to be totally blamed for squandering a 2-0 lead. They must have been tired after arriving the same morning from the Arab Clubs Championships in Riyadh. The team's morale was also surely at a low point after their 6-1 loss to host Al Nasr in their last match which Al Wihdat completed with eight players. They later learned of the suspension of captain Yousef Amouri for a year in Arab championships. Al Wihdat will have to put their house in order

before facing Al Jazireh Friday if they want to keep their chances for retaining the title.

Meanwhile, former champions Al Faisali moved up one place to third after a 2-1 win over Al Baqaa. They next play Sahab Thursday.

Similarly, Al Qadissieh's 2-1 win over Al Russeifa was a crucial one that

moved them two places up to fourth. They next play ninth placed Al Ahli hoping to further improve their standing in weeks to come.

Al Ahli remained in the same position after only managing a 1-1 draw with Sahab, while Kufroum dropped three places to sixth last week and will play last-placed Al Russeifa Thursday.

Schedule of 13th week		Amman Stadium
Wed. 13/12	Qadissieh vs. Ahli	Amman Stadium
Thurs. 14/12	Faisali vs. Sahab	Salt Stadium
Fri. 15/12	Russeifa vs. Kufroum	Salt Stadium
Fri. 15/12	Baqaa vs. Jalil	Hassan Stadium
Fri. 15/12	Jazireh vs. Wihdat	Amman Stadium

* All matches are at 2:30 p.m.

STANDING AFTER 12TH WEEK

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Ramtha	12	8	3	1	18	4	27
Husseini	12	6	5	1	25	8	23
Faisali	12	6	4	2	17	8	22
Qadissieh	12	6	3	3	17	12	21
Wihdat	12	5	5	2	19	12	20
Kufroum	12	5	5	2	14	9	20
Jazireh	12	4	4	4	19	18	16
Ahli	12	3	6	3	16	11	15
Baqaa	12	3	3	6	19	21	12
Sahab	12	1	8	3	10	15	11
Jalil	12	1	2	9	11	28	5
Russeifa	12	-	-	12	9	47	-



Miami Dolphins' wide receiver O.J. McDuffie (left) celebrates with receiver Irving Fryar after catching a Dan Marino pass for a second quarter touchdown against the Kansas City Chiefs (Reuters photo)

Dolphins defence stops Chiefs, Marino sets another record

MIAMI (R) — Dan Marino broke another NFL passing record but it was a surprising defensive performance that kept the Miami Dolphins afloat in the playoff chase with a 13-6 win Monday over the AFC-best Kansas City Chiefs.

Miami (8-6) cashed in on early, uncharacteristic turnovers by the Chiefs and shut out Kansas City (11-3) for nearly 55 minutes to maintain control of their playoff destiny.

Wins in their final two games on the road against Buffalo and St. Louis will put the Dolphins into the post-season party.

"We as a team are headed in the right direction," Dolphins coach Don Shula said.

Kansas City came in with the NFL's best record and turnover rating (plus-13), having lost the ball just 16 times in 12 games. But the Chiefs committed three turnovers in the first half, two of which led to Pete Stoyanovich field goals.

"We were ready to play," Dolphins defensive end Jeff Cross said. "The team was focused and we knew what we were up against. They are as good as anyone in the National Football League and they are a physical team."

Marino was 18-of-34 for 155 yards and a four-yard touchdown pass to O.J. McDuffie in the second quarter. In the fourth quarter he passed Fran Tarkenton as the NFL's all-time passing attempts leader with 6,468.

Marino has broken the marks held by Tarkenton for completions, touchdowns and yardage this season but this was the first time that he surpassed one of the records in a win.

"I don't think I played very well tonight," Marino said. "I don't think offensively we did the things we needed to do."

The Dolphins defence made a pair of key fourth-down stops in the third quar-

ter that ended Kansas City drives deep in Miami territory.

But the Chiefs kept on coming and got on the scoreboard when Steve Bono hit Webster Slaughter with a five-yard scoring pass with 5:04 remaining. Lin Elliott's extra point try failed but Kansas City was in striking range at 13-6.

The loss cost the Chiefs a chance to clinch a first-round bye in the Playoffs. Kansas City already has won the AFC Western Division and can still claim home field throughout the playoffs with wins at home against Denver and Seattle.

For Miami and its venerable coach Shula, who has been under fire for disappointing results, the victory was crucial.

"I hope we're back on track," Marino said. "We've won two games in a row. We played a tough football team and defensively, we played outstanding."

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PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		TEL: 518274 - 619275	TEL: 625155
Kevin Costner in WATERWORLD		Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi and Mahmoud Hamideh in A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt. (Arabic)		CONCORD "1" Jacques Nicklson & Michel Feifer...in WOLF Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Sylvester Stallone...in ASSASSINS Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15		MUSA HIJAZIN "Sumaa" in Hi Citizen daily at 8:30 p.m. Written & directed by Mohammad Shawagfeh	Shows begin on Dec. 19, 1995 and continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (three days a week) only. The programme continues until the start of the holy month of Ramadan. The Show is entitled: "Ahlan Tatbie" Welcome Normalisation For reservation call 625155

World Cup qualifying draw Jordan to play UAE, Bahrain in 1st round

PARIS (AFP) — FIFA, world football's governing body, announced the World Cup draw here on Tuesday for the 1998 World Cup finals in France.

France (hosts, Brazil (holders) qualify automatically 30 other qualifiers

ASIA (36 entries, 3 or 4 qualifiers) 1st round

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Chinese Taipei

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan

Group 9: Iraq, Kazakhstan, Pakistan

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines

10 group winners qualify for second round.

2nd round: Two groups of 5. The first two from each group (4 teams) contest Asian finals. The first three qualify directly for France, and the winner of a play-off between the fourth Asian team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

SOUTH AFRICA (9 entries, 4 qualifiers) Round-robin. First four qualify.

Fixtures 1996. April 24: Argentina v. Bolivia, Venezuela v. Uruguay, Colombia v. Paraguay, Ecuador v. Peru

June 2: Ecuador v. Argentina, Uruguay v. Paraguay, Venezuela v. Chile, Peru v. Colombia

July 7: Peru v. Argentina, Chile v. Ecuador, Colombia v. Uruguay, Bolivia v. Venezuela

Sept. 1: Argentina v. Paraguay, Colombia v. Chile, Ecuador v. Venezuela, Bolivia v. Peru

Sept. 9: Venezuela v. Argentina, Uruguay v. Bolivia, Ecuador v. Colombia, Paraguay v. Chile

Nov. 10: Chile v. Uruguay, Bolivia v. Colombia, Paraguay v. Ecuador, Peru v. Venezuela

Dec. 15: Argentina v. Chile, Uruguay v. Peru, Venezuela v. Colombia, Bolivia v. Paraguay

1997

Jan. 12: Uruguay v. Argentina, Peru v. Chile, Venezuela v. Paraguay, Bolivia v. Ecuador

Feb. 12: Colombia v. Argentina, Ecuador v. Uruguay, Paraguay v. Peru, Bolivia v. Chile

April 2: Bolivia v. Argentina, Uruguay v. Venezuela, Paraguay v. Colombia, Peru v. Ecuador

April 30: Argentina v. Ecuador, Paraguay v. Uruguay, Chile v. Venezuela, Colombia v. Peru

June 8: Argentina v. Peru, Ecuador v. Chile, Uruguay v. Colombia, Venezuela v. Bolivia

July 6: Paraguay v. Argentina, Chile v. Colombia, Peru v. Bolivia, Venezuela v. Ecuador

July 20: Argentina v. Venezuela, Bolivia v. Uruguay, Colombia v. Ecuador, Chile v. Paraguay

Aug. 20: Uruguay v. Chile, Colombia v. Bolivia, Ecuador v. Paraguay, Venezuela v. Peru

Sept. 10: Chile v. Argentina



The logo of the 1998 soccer World Cup scheduled for June 10-July 12 in France (AFP photo)

na, Peru v. Uruguay, Colombia v. Venezuela, Paraguay v. Bolivia

Oct. 12: Chile v. Peru, Paraguay v. Venezuela, Ecuador v. Bolivia

Nov. 16: Argentina v. Colombia, Uruguay v. Ecuador, Peru v. Paraguay, Chile v. Bolivia

AFRICA (36 entries, 5 qualifiers) 1st round knock-out; Home and away

Sudan v. Zambia, Namibia v. Mozambique, Tanzania v. Ghana, Swaziland v. Gabon

Uganda v. Angola, Mauritius v. Zaire, Malawi v. South Africa

Madagascar v. Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau v. Guinea, Rwanda v. Tunisia

Congo v. Ivory Coast, Kenya v. Algeria, Burundi v. Sierra Leone

Mauritania v. Burkina Faso, Togo v. Senegal, Gambia v. Liberia

The winners of these 16 matches, plus Cameroon, Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco will be drawn into five second round groups of four teams each. The five group winners qualify for France.

The draw for the second round will be made when 1st matches are completed.

EUROPE (50 entries, 14 qualifiers)

Group 1: Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Group 2: Italy, England, Poland, Georgia, Moldova

Group 3: Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary, Azerbaijan

Group 4: Sweden, Scotland,

and Polynesian group winner.

Group 2: New Zealand, Fiji, Melanesian group winner. Winners qualify for Oceania finals.

Two group winners play home and away. Winner faces Asian finals fourth team for place in 1998 finals.

CONCACAF (Caribbean, Central and North America) (30 entries, 3 qualifiers) 1st round

Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Salvador and USA given bye

Caribbean Zone 1st Rd. 4 matches (home and away)

Match A: Aruba v. Dominican Republic

Match B: Bahamas v. St. Kitts and Nevis

Match C: Guyana v. Grenada

Match D: Dominica v. Antigua

2nd round: 8 matches (home and away)

Match 1: Bermuda v. Trinidad and Tobago

Match 2: Puerto Rico v. St. Vincent

Match 3: Cayman Islands v. Cuba (both matches in Cayman)

Match 4: Winner B v. St. Lucia

Match 5: Winner C v. Haiti

Match 6: Surinam v. Jamaica

Match 7: Winner D v. Barbados

Match 8: Winner A v. Netherlands Antilles

3rd round: Eight 2nd round winners go into draw, which will be organized at a later date. Winners of matches these matches — A, B, C, and D — qualify for Concacaf semi-finals.

Central America 1st round

Match E: Nicaragua v. Guatemala

Match F: Belize v. Panama

Winners qualify for Concacaf semi-finals

Concacaf semi-finals

Group 1: USA, Costa Rica, Caribbean 3rd Rd match D winner, Central American 1st Rd match E winner

Group 2: Canada, Salvador, Central American F winner, Caribbean A winner

Group 3: Mexico, Honduras, Caribbean B winner, Caribbean C winner

Concacaf finals

First two from each semi-final group (six teams) contest round-robin (home and away matches).

First three qualify for France.

Everton continue 6-game unbeaten run

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — Everton stretched their unbeaten run to six games with a victory over West Ham, who had their goalkeeper sent off when only a goal behind, here on Monday.

The game changed dramatically in the space of eight minutes with Everton scoring twice and the Hammers losing goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko. He was sent off for grabbing Nigerian striker Daniel Amokachi as the ball bounced out of his reach.

Everton took the lead after 34 minutes with a bizarre goal after Amokachi and Andrei Kanchelskis had been involved in the build-up.

Kanchelskis could not get enough power on his shot and it broke to Graham Stuart, who scuffed his shot past the stranded Miklosko.

Miklosko was sent off three minutes before half-time by referee Mike Reed after upending Amokachi as he fired in a rebound after Stuart had released Kanchelskis.

Julian Dicks replaced Miklosko between the posts as West Ham had no substitute goalkeeper but his first task was to pick the ball out of the net, with Davis Unsworth converting the penalty.

John Eberell slid in the third half through the second half when Dick failed to hold a low Amokachi shot.

But West Ham, for whom Mark Rieper was a tower of strength in defence, could be satisfied with restricting Everton to only one more goal in the second half.

JBF reflects on Asian championships agenda Will U-18 women's team compete in Bangkok?

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's first participation in an Asian championship in 1996 will mark another record in the country's sports archives.

The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF), probably the most active in regional and international championships, has received the 1996-98 Asian Basketball Confederation agenda. That is not the point of interest however, but rather the fact that the JBF is keen on regrouping an Under-18 women's national team to take part in the 13th Junior Women Championship scheduled to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, April 21-28.

Jordan had not participated in an Asian women's championship until this past summer when after a 12-year absence, the women's national team was regrouped and took part in the 16th Asian Basketball championship in Shizuoka, Japan in July.

While the team only beat Indonesia and lost their remaining four matches, the players undoubtedly benefited from their experience. Furthermore, the participation was a historic one, as Jordan was the first and only Arab country in such a

competition. One of the team's key players, Jumana Salti, was chosen among the tournament's top five players.

Realising that the regrouping of a women's team was long overdue, the JBF is now keen on broadening the base of women's basketball by enlisting younger players.

Initially, the JBF has decided to take part in this championship as it will be a good start for younger players," the head of the JBF's Women's Basketball Committee Muna Janho told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

Janho said the JBF would contact schools and clubs and ask for qualified U-18 players to attend national team trials. If a good number of competent players attend, the team is scheduled to start practice in the coming three weeks so as to have enough time to prepare for the competition.

The JBF will soon get its annual budget from the Ministry of Youth. However, it was not yet clear how the cost of participation would be covered or if the JBF had potential sponsors for the upcoming year.

The ministry's budget to most federations ranges between JD 10,000 and JD 15,000, which is not enough to cover travel expenses for

one team. Last year the JBF spent over JD 100,000 on the men's, youth's, women's national teams as well as local competitions, three of which have not been played so far. The U-16 and U-18 seem to be off the list, but the first division championship has been set for Jan. 15.

Last year, the JBF spent most of its budget on the youth's team who got third place in Asia and qualified to the world championship. The JBF was able to cover the national team's expenses with the help of sponsors like the municipality of Greater Amman, Opel, RJ and a host of others. The women's team also enlisted the support of friends of the game. Institutions and individuals donated two thirds of the amount and the team made it to Japan with a generous donation from Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath who learned of the team's difficulty in covering their travel expenses and donated the rest of the amount.

Other Asian competitions on the JBF's agenda for the upcoming year include the men's 7th champions cup in Manila, the 14th junior men's tournament in Malaysia, and the 2nd U-22 men's competition in Shanghai.

Glassmann receives FIFA Fair Play Award

PARIS (R) — Former Valenciennes player Jacques Glassmann, the man who blew the whistle on the Marseille bribery scandal in 1993, was given the 1995 FIFA Fair Play Award

FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper said: "Glassmann showed courage and honesty in revealing a particularly notorious case of corruption."

Glassmann told Valenciennes officials before the French league match with Marseille that he and two other players had been offered bribes to throw the game.

Former Marseille president Bernard Tapie has been sentenced to two years in jail, of which 16 months are suspended, for corruption. He is still contesting the decision in France's supreme court.

Jordan Times
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S. Arabia denies border skirmish

SANAA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia has boosted its military presence along its disputed border with Yemen after five people were wounded in an armed clash last week, officials said here Tuesday.

But Saudi Arabia denied the report, saying it "was groundless, inexact and lacking credibility."

Officials here said Yemeni border guards, who are tribesmen, were involved in the clash on the borders of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman last Thursday after Saudi troops had infiltrated Yemeni territory several times.

"The incident took place after the Saudi army staged several shows of force along the border and tried to change the demographic structure of the disputed border regions," an official here said, asking not to be named.

The Saudi army has since sent reinforcements to the border along with heavy weapons and helicopters, Yemeni officials told AFP.

Officials here added that Yemen's Parliament Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar was to travel later Tuesday to Saudi Arabia for talks with Saudi Defence Minister Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, who handles affairs with Yemen.

Sheikh Ahmar is to chair a meeting of a joint committee which oversees border negotiations under an accord concluded in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in February aimed at resolving bilateral differences.

In issuing the denial, the SPA said Saudi Arabia was concerned about cooperation with Yemen on the basis of the Mecca accord.

A joint commission tasked with demarcating the border is due to meet on Dec. 20 in Riyadh.

The sources said the latest clashes took place near Al Kharakir, an area which

Yemeni sources said belonged to Yemen but was seized by Saudi Arabia in earlier confrontations.

The sources also said Saudi Arabia had been building up its military presence in Al Kharakir for the past three days.

The Saudi Arabian news agency SPA, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, quoted a well-informed source at the Defence Ministry as describing the reports of clashes as "absolutely untrue."

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is eager to cooperate with the brothers in the Republic of Yemen, proceeding from the memorandum of mutual understanding signed by the two countries during the month of Ramadan last year," the source was quoted as saying.

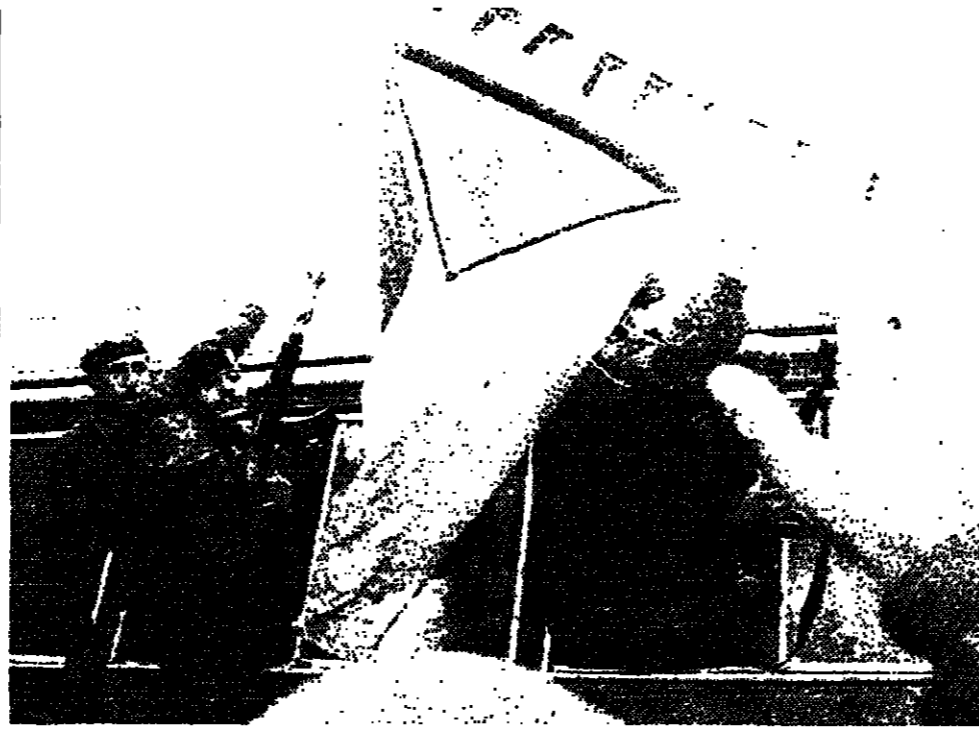
Saudi Arabia, which occupies about 80 per cent of the Arabian peninsula, has been moving this year to settle its border disputes and reached agreements with both Oman and Yemen.

Parts of the long Yemeni-Saudi border have oil and gas deposits. Western oil industry experts say.

Links between the two neighbours have been tense since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait when Yemen, then a member of the U.N. Security Council, voted against sanctioning the Gulf war.

Relations suffered another blow during Yemen's two-month civil war in 1994 when some Yemeni officials in the capital Sanaa in the north accused Saudi Arabia of backing a failed southern secessionist bid.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited Saudi Arabia in June for reconciliation talks with King Fahd aimed at restoring once-closely ties. Before the Gulf crisis, Saudi Arabia was Yemen's main financial backer.



ISRAEL-FREE NABLUS: Some of 1,200 Palestinians sweep in to take control of Nablus, the largest town in the West Bank, early Tuesday after the Israeli army withdrew from the town 24 hours ahead of schedule (see page one) (AFP photo)

Ancient Samaritans welcome arrival of Palestinian self-rule

NABLUS (AFP) — The Samaritans, a tiny and ancient Hebrew people living perched on a hillside above this West Bank town, enthusiastically welcomed the arrival Tuesday of Palestinian autonomy.

"We are part of the Palestinian people, with the same education and lifestyle, despite our particularity," said Peleg Alif, head of the Samaritans who claim to be direct descendants of one of the 12 tribes of Israel.

The Samaritans were believed to be among the Israelites who remained in Samaria after the Assyrian invasion and expulsion of most Jews to Babylonia in 721 B.C.

Today only 600 Samaritans remain, speaking an ancient form of Hebrew among themselves and worshipping only according to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Rather than dreaming of the Holy City of Jerusalem, the Samaritans have for centuries held onto their "sacred mountain," Mount Gerizim, overlooking Nablus and its 130,000 Palestinian residents.

"We are not Jewish, we are authentic Hebrews," declares Mr. Alif, seated comfortably in the well-appointed living room of his modern house, dominated by a giant satellite dish out front.

Each Samaritan bears both a Hebrew and Arabic name. Peleg Alif is also known as Farouk Al Samari.

Mr. Peleg works as director of the Rafidia hospital in Nablus and most of his fellow Samaritans are employed in various administrative offices around the town.

Their prosperous village, Kiryat Luza, is a neat hamlet of paved streets and tidy stone houses surrounded by gardens.

Three hundred people live

in Kiryat Luza, while the other 300 surviving Samaritans live in Holon, near Tel Aviv, keeping vacation homes in Nablus.

Their existence may be well-known through the Biblical parable of the good Samaritan, but the modern Samaritans say they have been fighting for their survival and welcomed the arrival of Palestinian autonomy in Nablus.

The Palestinian National Authority has agreed to reserve one seat for the Samaritans in the self-rule council due to be chosen in elections in the West Bank and Gaza on Jan. 20.

"It's the first time we have been recognised by a government," said Mr. Peleg, who has met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to discuss the future of his community and is expected to be elected to the Palestinian legislature in next month's vote.

Egypt invites Hamas to dialogue with PNA

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Egypt has invited the Palestinian militant movement Hamas for reconciliation talks with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Cairo, due to open on Saturday, the movement said.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in a statement received here, said Tuesday that Egypt's representative in the autonomous Gaza Strip, Mahmoud Karim, delivered the invitation.

The statement also said that Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, who heads the PNA, had promised to release Sayyed Abu Messme, a leading Hamas official.

But Mr. Arafat on Tuesday declined to confirm such a release, telling journalists, "We will see."

Before the invitation, which was a condition for Hamas to attend the Cairo dialogue, the movement's spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh said in Amman no date had been fixed.

The two sides said Monday in Gaza City after Mr. Arafat met two Hamas delegates, Mahmoud Zahar and Mohammad Shamaa, that the talks would be held on Saturday.

"A Hamas delegation will travel Wednesday to Cairo and then on to Khartoum to meet members of Hamas abroad, before returning to Cairo to meet members of the Palestinian Authority," Dr. Zahar told journalists.

Mr. Ghosheh said Mr.

Arafat "had sought to launch the dialogue, but Hamas maintained that it would not go to Cairo without receiving a commitment to adhere to the dialogue mechanisms."

"The mechanism, a formal Egyptian invitation and the date are complementary and so far we had not received an answer. When we do we will set the date."

In Cairo, Foreign Minister Amr Musa told journalists that Hamas did not "need an official invitation to come to Egypt" to take part in the talks on Saturday.

Mr. Arafat has launched moves to try to persuade Hamas to join in the first Palestinian elections on Jan. 20, but so far the group has repeatedly said it will boycott the poll.

Mr. Ghosheh also declared as invalid "any declarations from parties claiming to have ties with Hamas," adding they were just part of the Palestinian self-rule authority "even though they hide behind the Islamic banner."

The Islamic National Salvation Party, which includes former members of the militant group, has declared it would officially register in the next few weeks for the elections.

But Mr. Ghosheh said: "We tell those party members they will go to the ballots alone. They only represent the Palestinian National Authority."

All Hamas officials adamantly reject taking part in the elections.



Charles to make debut on Internet

LONDON (R) — Britain's Prince Charles is to make his debut on the Internet with a speech to business leaders. The heir to the throne takes to the information superhighway Tuesday, the fifth anniversary of his Business Leaders Forum which brings top executives together from around the world. A spokesman for the forum, which is putting his speech out worldwide, said: "It is a way of getting the same message across to schoolchildren gathered round the computer in an Indian village and to a boardroom in New York."

Chinese jet taxis into trouble at Manila Airport

MANILA (R) — A China Airlines Jumbo Jet that damaged an engine when it hit a truck after landing in Manila Monday had even worse luck when it tried to take off Tuesday. The Boeing 747 swerved off the runway and got bogged down in mud, forcing the airport's closure to all 747 flights for two or three days until the marooned Jumbo can be dislodged, airport officials told reporters. The only airport runway still open is not long enough to take Jumbo Jets, they said. "Definitely, the runway is closed. It will take two to three days before we can put the runway in normal operation," aviation safety chief Saturnino De La Cruz told Reuters. Air Transportation Office Director General Panfilo Villaruel said the China Airlines jet swerved to the right just before take-off and ran off the runway, damaging its nose wheels. It was supposed to fly to Taipei for repairs after it hit the truck. The truck had also got stuck in mud next to the runway. The only people aboard were the pilot, an engineer and a flight officer. None of them was hurt. None of the 323 passengers and crew on Monday's flight was hurt either. De La Cruz said the crewmembers would be questioned. Manila has been the site of several bizarre accidents, including a collision between a private plane and a car last October and a plane killing a man on the runway.

Minister, wife not guilty in child-sex case

WATERVILLE, Washington (R) — In a sexual abuse case that turned a media spotlight on a quiet northwestern apple-growing town, a jury Monday found a Pentecostal minister and his wife not guilty of child sexual abuse. The Douglas County Superior Court jury found unordained Pastor Robert Robertson and his wife, Connie, not guilty on all 14 charges of child sexual abuse and molestation. The Robertsons were central figures in a two-year investigation of child sexual abuse in the central Washington town of Wenatchee and the surrounding area, about 40 kilometres from the Waterville courthouse, which is known for Washington state apples. They were charged with raping and molesting minors including their own 5-year-old daughter at home and at the East Wenatchee Pentecostal Church Of God where Robert "Roby" Robertson was pastor. More than 40 adults have been charged and 28 are in prison as a result of an investigation led by Wenatchee Police Detective Robert Perez, who has been criticised for his methods, including a strong reliance on statements of his own 11-year-old foster daughter, who said she had been sexually abused.

Briton's statements recall tour guide's last moments

LARNACA (AFP) — The horrific details of Danish tour guide Louise Jensen's final moments were revealed in statements from three accused British soldiers read out in court here Tuesday.

Alan Ford, 27, Jeff Pernel, 23, and Justin Fowler, 27, deny charges of manslaughter, abduction, and conspiracy to rape Jensen, 23, in September last year.

But they revealed the details of Jensen's killing in conflicting statements given to police and read to the court by Chief Inspector Charalambos Argiropoulos.

Fowler, who blamed his co-accused for the killing, admitted all three tried to rape Jensen after the terrified 25-year-old was violently stripped naked on a remote dirt road.

"She was sitting on the edge of the car crying and

wiping blood from her nose," wrote Fowler.

He then described how all three tried to rape her, and that Ford then hit her with a spade before dragging her away, helped by Pernel.

He claimed they returned five minutes later saying they had buried the tour guide, whose body was found in a shallow grave two days later.

Fowler admitted Jensen was not knocked from a motor bike earlier that evening ridden by her boyfriend before being bundled into their car.

In the guilt-ridden confession Fowler began, "Lord please forgive me for not giving the full truth sooner. This event is always on my mind and it's stopping me from sleeping and acting normally."

(Continued on page 7)

Shells hit Kabul, kill three

KABUL (Agencies) — Three people, including two civilians, were killed and two others injured when Taliban militiamen launched an artillery attack on the besieged Afghan capital, witnesses and defence sources said.

The two civilians were killed instantly when the first of a salvo of about five shells rained down on a city street at about 10 a.m., while a third man — an army officer — died in the same blast, witnesses said.

The lower half of one of the dead civilians had been completely vapourised, leaving only a pool of blood and a smattering of body parts scattered on the road.

Survivors nearby took cover in drains and against walls as the barrage lasting about 15 minutes battered the vicinity of the presidential palace.

"The shells came in as the poor people of the city were

walking in the streets on their way to get provisions for the winter days," said Humayoun, a security guard at the deserted Italian embassy near where the three pedestrians were killed.

The other four shells fell in nearby areas of the war-torn capital, causing no reported casualties, although one struck the compound of the state radio and television station, hospital staff and officials said.

Nervous residents fled the blast scene, fearing that more shells could land. Two bloodied corpses lay barely three metres from the fresh shell crater scarring the road.

"They were all killed by the first explosion while they were just walking to the shops. How does that threaten the Taliban's?" asked Humayoun, shaking his head.

"I don't know how they

can call themselves Islamic. These Taliban are just butchers," said a passer-by. Taliban fighters, dug into hills skirting the southern suburbs of Kabul, have pledged to conquer the capital and overthrow President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The radio and television complex is close to Rabbani's presidential palace, a past target for Taliban gunners.

Taliban leaders could not be reached immediately for comment. In the past the militia has warned civilians to move away from what it calls military targets in Kabul.

The Taliban, who emerged little more than a year ago, say they want to decree strict Islamic law throughout Afghanistan and sweep away Mr. Rabbani's government, composed of what they term corrupt and power-hungry guerrilla factions.

Clinton is upbeat over Syrian-Israeli peace track

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Detecting a "new atmosphere" in the Middle East, President Bill Clinton will send Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Syria next week to seize a fresh opportunity for a comprehensive settlement.

Mr. Clinton reviewed with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres the latest developments in the region on Monday, expressing the sombre belief that the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin will lend new impetus to the quest for a settlement because it demonstrates so starkly Israel's commitment to peace.

"Very frankly, said as it is to say, I think the Syrian leader and the Syrian people now see the exceptional price that former Prime Minister Rabin and Prime Minister Peres have been willing to pay in their search for peace," the president said. "I think that is the fundamental new reality here. I don't think any of the details matter nearly as much as that fundamental new reality."

Mr. Clinton said Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had agreed to the Christopher mission, which will seek ways to translate a new interest in peace into practical negotiating mechanisms. At a news conference held jointly with Mr. Peres, Mr. Clinton said he will convey to the Syrian leader "the essential elements of my meeting" with Mr. Peres, and he paraphrased Mr. Peres as saying the "atmosphere is better than it was before."

A senior administration official said Mr. Clinton

thinks the Rabin assassination "has focused attention" by both sides in the Mideast conflict and has "heightened the sense on what is at stake. What we are now hearing from the Syrian side," he said, "is that they are determined to move ahead quickly."

The assassination, he added, "has reminded everyone of the stakes and made it very clear that people like Prime Minister Rabin were prepared to commit themselves to an effort even if it meant exposing themselves personally, and I think that had an effect."

He said that "sense of urgency" had been lacking in previous discussions. "The essence of what we heard today," he explained, "is that both sides are serious. The challenge that we face now is to see whether that general commitment becomes translatable into specific decisions."

In Damascus, Mr. Christopher will be seeking "a better way to engage in very serious negotiations. We have to find a way to move from where we are to where we need to be."

Until now, the official conceded, the process has not come up with a sustained "mechanism that would be a serious way of solving problems. We had discussions," he explained, but had not found a "more intensive, factual way of identifying problems, of identifying points of convergence, of recognising areas where 'common language' could be applied to

start solution, even in areas of disagreement.

The official said Washington is hearing from both sides "a willingness to engage with greater energy. We, too, are prepared to engage with greater energy. What we feel now is (that) not only is there a desire for peace but a different kind of intensity that each side seems to be prepared to offer."

Calling it "too soon" to draw final judgments on these promising signs, he said Mr. Christopher "will have to get out there (in Damascus) and see how the general can be moved to the specific."

The official, citing Mr. Peres' well-known reputation as a strategic thinker, told reporters the prime minister had conveyed to Mr. Clinton — and thus to Mr. Assad — an enlarged view of how to approach peace with Syria and Lebanon, placing less stress on individual issues and more on creating a mechanism to resolve differences. He said that while it would be inappropriate to get into details, Mr. Peres took "a very panoramic view of the problem" and how to go about dealing with it.

On the Israeli side, the official detected "an effort now to see the totality of all the issues... in a way that focuses on all the issues," not just hot-button topics like the Golan Heights. He said Mr. Peres presented a "broadened and enlarged approach to how to think about the process."

The official said Mr. Clinton and Mr. Peres, in a pri-

vate meeting, focussed on the Syrian track of the peace process, while during a plenary luncheon session the leaders and their aides discussed "where Israel is in relation to her Arab neighbours." By pre-arrangement, Mr. Clinton left that session to take a telephone call from Mr. Assad in the residence portion of the White House.

He spoke for about 10 or 12 minutes, the official said, "and President Assad welcomed the president's assessment of what he had heard from Prime Minister Peres, agreed that Secretary Christopher should visit Damascus, and that he would join the president and the prime minister in recommitting himself to moving forward to reach an agreement on the Syrian track."

Although news accounts have speculated that a force of U.S. troops on the Golan Heights would monitor any agreement between Tel Aviv and Damascus, Mr. Clinton told a questioner neither side has formally made such request. "We have not been asked," he said.

Asked if an agreement with Syria would lead to a formal defence treaty between Washington and Tel Aviv, Mr. Clinton replied that the "security of Israel is terribly important to the United States. We have made an explicit policy commitment... to maintain the qualitative and technological edge that Israel needs to guarantee its security in an atmosphere that has been far more hostile

than it is even today, and so I think you can be assured that the security of Israel is going to be one of the main pillars of America's defence commitments and one of the main things we'll be concerned about as we move through the peace process."

The president announced a new technological accord with Tel Aviv, the use of unmanned space vehicles and the U.S. space shuttle to conduct space-based experiments in "sustainable water use and environmental protection." Since some of the programmes will involve the planned international space station, Mr. Clinton said the United States would train Israeli astronauts to participate in the project. Both countries, he said, will benefit from the technological results of their cooperation and of the programmes.

The official said Mr. Peres had been discussing technology questions with Vice President Al Gore on water resources and hydrogeology. "What we agreed to do," the official explained, "is to organise efforts by U.S. and Israeli scientists" on experiments conducted from space.

Mr. Clinton told a questioner he has no present plans to visit Palestine territory but said he "expects to go back to the Middle East at an appropriate time," perhaps connected with "another advance in the cause of peace." He said he expects the Palestinian elections to go forward in a manner international observers will regard as legitimate.

Egypt deports Kaddoumi's uncle to Libya border camp

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt has expelled to the Libyan border the 75-year-old uncle of Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi, a U.N. official said on Tuesday.

The man, Rassem Helmi Mohammad Kaddoumi, who fought in the Egyptian army in 1948 and had lived in Egypt as a tailor for 30 to 40 years, is now among about 180 Palestinians stranded in a tented encampment on the Libyan side of the Egyptian border.

"He had failed to renew his residence documents. First they put him in prison and then they expelled him to Libya about two weeks ago," said the official, who asked not to be named.

Mr. Kaddoumi's uncle is one of a handful of Palestinians who came to the camp from the Egyptian side. The vast majority tried to leave Libya during a Libyan campaign to expel them and then refused to go back when the Libyans relented.

The U.N. official said conditions at the camp were poor and the Libyans stopped providing food after Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi announced in October that he would let Palestinians stay in the country for at least another three months.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has since provided them with tinned food, their only source of sustenance.

The 180 Palestinians have a

mixture of travel documents — Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian or Libyan — but some of them have expired and the Egyptians have refused to let them through.

They have closed the road across the border with barricades almost every day this month to press their demand for permission to go to Gaza, the West Bank or to Arab countries.

"They threatened to close the border for an hour extra every day and by Dec. 5 they had reached eight hours. They had planned to close it totally last Saturday but it didn't happen, possibly because they were frightened," the official said.

"They have only 20 tents or so and it's very cold and there's wind because the camp's in a high place," the official added.

Rassem Kaddoumi fought alongside Egyptian troops in the 1948 war against Israel and had an Egyptian permit "which ran out during the Gulf conflict (1990-91), but at the time security services did not renew such documents."

Three other Palestinians with expired documents were expelled with Mr. Kaddoumi, officials said. The official said they did not know why Cairo chose to deport them to Libya.

Colonel Qadhafi has vowed to resume the expulsion campaign to force the Palestinians back into the self-rule areas of Gaza and the West Bank.

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